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**GENERAL PURPOSE FORCE CAPABILITY; THE CHALLENGE OF
VERSATILITY AND ACHIEVING BALANCE ALONG THE WIDEST
POSSIBLE SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.

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ABSTRACT

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review and DoD's current defense strategy calls for U.S. forces sized, shaped, and with the right mix of capabilities to meet future challenges across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Throughout history, determining and anticipating the required capabilities needed to defeat future threats has proven to be a challenge. Over four years ago the U.S. military assessed the requirement to increase irregular warfare capability. Little has changed to date to increase proficiency and capability beyond what military members and organizations have done internal to adapt to conditions on the ground. This thesis finds that the U.S. military continues to experience great difficulty in defining and implementing the required changes needed to increase irregular warfare capability within our general purpose forces. Complex and laborious processes within the joint community, Service inertia and resistance to change, strategy that defers hard choices, and competing factors within the strategic environment increase the risk to achieving the envisioned balance of capabilities along the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

This paper recommends that future capabilities be clearly defined based hard-strategy driven decisions. Additionally, force structure, procurement, and professional military education need reform that moves them in line with the joint capabilities we desire for the future joint force. Until this is done, General purpose forces (GPF) will be forced to rely on their proven ability to adapt to complex environment for which they did not adequately anticipate or for which they were not fully prepared.

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GENERAL PURPOSE FORCE CAPABILITY; THE CHALLENGE OF VERSATILITY AND ACHIEVING BALANCE ALONG THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT

1. INTRODUCTION

From Irregular Threat to the Widest Possible Spectrum of Conflict

*Irregular Warfare has emerged as a major form of warfare*¹

Following the release of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), as a result of hard lessons learned during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2005 and 2007, driven by assessments and studies predicting future threats, and at the direction of U.S. Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Robert M. Gates, the Department of Defense (DoD) elevated the strategic importance of irregular warfare (IW).²

Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) Number 3000.07, published December 1, 2008, issued policy that recognized IW as being as strategically important as traditional warfare. Elevation of irregular warfare on an equal footing with traditional warfare generated significant debate within the military services and overall defense community. Later, in February of 2009, Secretary Robert M. Gates released his *Foreign Affairs* article on Balance. The *Foreign Affairs* article addressed an imbalance between conventional and irregular warfighting capability in the military.³ It appeared that the

¹ Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, (14 May 2007). x.

² Department of Defense Directive Number 3000.07, *Irregular Warfare*, Office of the Secretary of Defense, (Washington D.C.: December 1, 2008).

³ Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy, Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age." *Foreign Affairs*, (January/February 2009), 28-40. The imbalance between traditional and irregular capability is only

U.S. Military was making major strategy and policy changes to shift the balance of capability in the defense portfolio from traditional to irregular capability. The only question in mid-2009 seemed to be how far the pendulum would swing in the direction of irregular warfare.

Work and debate on the subject of IW and identifying required IW capabilities has been ongoing since early 2006. As this traditional warfare versus irregular warfare debate continued, a significant change occurred. Throughout 2009, as the 2010 QDR and Fiscal Year 2011 (FY 11) Defense Budget developed, the concept of balance changed.⁴ A key indicator as to what the change would be was clearly signaled on July 16, 2009, in remarks given by Secretary Gates before the Economic Club of Chicago. In this speech, Secretary Gates clearly signaled what would eventually be scripted in the next (2010) QDR. Secretary Gates articulated that the balance debate went well beyond a simple focus of traditional versus irregular warfighting capability.

Between January 2009 and February 2010, Secretary Gates in speeches articulated his intent to balance defense capability across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. In his comments, he signaled the way-ahead that would be captured in the 2010 QDR and FY 11 Defense Budget - the need to balance capability to achieve proficiency along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. According to Secretary Gates, balance would be accomplished by reshaping the priorities of America's defense establishment,

a part of the overall balance debate. Chapter 2 of this document further defines the balance arguments posed by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

⁴ The author proposed the Balance Strategy expanded after the January 2009 Foreign Affairs article and as work was ongoing throughout 2009 on the 2010 QDR. The focus expanded beyond balancing between traditional and irregular capability, institutionalizing irregular warfare, and balancing or reforming acquisition as first proposed - to the concept of balancing resources and risk within the DoD portfolio of capabilities across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

reforming the way the Pentagon does business (the weapons we buy and how we buy them), and preparing to wage future wars rather than continuing the habit of rearming for previous ones.⁵ Secretary Gates stated, “What we need is a portfolio of military capabilities with maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.”⁶

This thesis began as an examination of the ability of U.S. general purpose forces to achieve the capability to balance between traditional and irregular warfare.⁷ On 1 February, 2010, with the release of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, this thesis evolved into addressing more than the simple question of achieving balance between traditional and irregular warfare capability. With the release of the 2010 QDR, the balance debate between general purpose forces - traditional versus irregular warfighting capability expanded into the wider debate of general purpose forces ability to achieve the desired capabilities to meet threats along the widest possible spectrum of conflict.⁸

The 2010 QDR concluded that because the future global environment and potential threats are so complex and difficult to predict, our military forces do not have the luxury of focusing capabilities on only those areas along the spectrum of conflict that cause us the most concern. The most recent QDR assesses that focusing defense capabilities towards one or two specific types of potential conflicts is risky and implies there is less risk in being prepared for all possibilities. The strategy and policy as

⁵ Robert M. Gates, "Remarks by Secretary Gates at a meeting of the Economic Club of Chicago." United States Department of Defense (defense.gov). <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1369> (accessed February 26, 2010).

⁶ Ibid, 2.

⁷ General Purpose Forces (GPF) defined as U.S. military individuals, units, and capabilities not specifically classified as special forces or special operations like units or capabilities.

⁸ What has not been articulated is if the widest possible spectrum of conflict is defined in relation to threats or defined as distinct forms of warfare that require specific capabilities by general purpose forces.

articulated in the 2010 QDR indicates our nation's military will be prepared to focus everywhere; everywhere along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Will our nation's general purpose forces be capable and versatile enough to achieve the desired balance along this loosely defined spectrum?

We have learned through painful experience that the wars we fight are seldom the wars we planned. As a result, the United States needs a broad portfolio of military capabilities with maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict⁹

Too narrow a focus is risky. Conversely, focusing across an entire spectrum of anything also has risk. Can you prepare with any certainty if you attempt to be prepared for everything? To relate this in football terms, it could be the equivalent of knowing you are going to play one of twenty-four teams in the league on Sunday. The only problem is you do not know which team you are going to play. To make matters more complex, you will not know until Saturday which field the contest will be played on. How do you prepare? Does the complexity of the situation prevent you from developing a game plan designed to exploit your opponent's weaknesses and play on your strengths? You are the league champs after all. Despite the unknowns, do you assume that your team is so good and your players are skilled that you could win against any team? Are your players versatile enough and is the coaching staff responsive enough to adapt when the opponent and field conditions become clear the day before the game? This is the situation our general purpose forces may now face in preparing for future conflicts.

⁹ Robert M. Gates, Statement made during the February 1, 2010 speech announcing the 2011 Defense Budget proposal and the release of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review. United States Department of Defense (defense.gov). Defense Budget/QSR Announcement, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1416> (accessed February 14, 2010).

Thesis

The thesis of this paper is that although general purpose forces possess the versatility and adaptability to accomplish missions along the widest possible spectrum of conflict, the ability of GPFs to execute missions across a wide spectrum and within acceptable risk depends on how we plan to employ force, how and if we can define and develop capabilities and enablers within our GPFs, and the mindset and education of leadership. Since the end of the Cold-War general purpose forces have displayed an ability to adapt to complex and unfamiliar situations. General purpose forces have proven to be versatile in dealing with unanticipated situations when faced with conditions they were not specifically trained or equipped for.

Experiences in operations conducted in the 1990s in Somalia and Haiti, and in recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq highlight useful lessons learned and provide hints to some of the possible challenges that GPFs will encounter in adapting to achieve balance across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. In looking at our past we will see that general purpose forces after the Cold-War encountered environments and situation that were complex and not easily understood. We will also find that GPFs are fully prepared for their last fight through equipping, training, education, and doctrine. This paradigm often leads to a false sense of readiness and preparedness that GPFs carry into complex environments different from the environment they anticipated operating in. Study of operations in the 1990s and of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq also show that when GPFs recognize the need to adapt they generally do so. The cumulative effects of these events in the past few years turned our attention and focus to the concept of irregular warfare – counterinsurgency, and now the full spectrum of conflict.

From these experiences over the past two decades, there is utility in examining the unexpected environments GPFs encountered in places like Somalia, Haiti, and Iraq. Understanding how GPFs adapted to meet often unanticipated requirements will enable both civilian and military planners to better plan for the use of military force in future operations along a wide spectrum of conflict. Understanding the dynamics that affect versatility and adaptability are especially critical when GPFs must prepare, and planners must plan, to apply forces at an unanticipated point on the “widest” possible spectrum of conflict. Understanding how we adapted in the past may help us better understand the challenges of the future.

Adaptability and Versatility

Lessons learned in recent operations as general purpose forces adapted to unfamiliar battlefield conditions out of necessity are valuable to understanding changes in thought and practice within the joint community and within individual services. Studying how our forces adapt, and the associated challenges and risk, will better posture future forces to meet the military requirements and achieve maximum versatility. Given current and anticipated fiscal realities of flat or minimally increasing defense budgets, GPFs must be capable of providing a Combatant Commander with the full range of capability and skills required.¹⁰ With a wide spectrum of capabilities to cover, military leaders will have a daunting task to balance capabilities that range from prevention through engagement on the low end of the spectrum to deterrence through strength or all out war on the high end. The identification of required capabilities and balancing resources and

¹⁰ A current assumption is defense budgets in FY11-13 will remain relatively constant. Given domestic pressure and an increasing national debt, defense spending may actually decrease slightly.

risk will be a particular challenge to our general purpose forces if we approach this issue in the same fashion as we have done in addressing the requirements for increasing irregular warfare capability. An examination of the IW debate and actions taken in the attempt to balance traditional versus irregular capability will shed some light on the challenge ahead, as the joint community and each Service attempts to move forward to define and meet the requirements of achieving capability across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

The discussion of irregular warfare is relevant to the thesis. The relevance is in examining and understanding how general purpose forces were applied in, and adapted to, complex situations in Somalia, Haiti, and Iraq. In each of these operations the military instrument of power was heavily applied. In each situation general purpose forces found themselves dealing with various complex conditions that were not fully anticipated. U.S. forces operated traditionally expecting to fight on the “major combat” point of the spectrum of conflict. Instead, most units experienced a different fight that required leaders and soldiers to adapt and new capabilities to be developed.

Also relevant in this thesis is the discussion of how DoD has gone about trying to define and achieve increased IW capability and proficiency. In gaining an appreciation for the complex and lengthy DoD process of defining and achieving desired joint capabilities over time, important lessons may come to light that can be taken into consideration as we expand the capability debate beyond IW. Understanding these experiences as they relate to the irregular warfare debate between the 2006 and the 2010 QDR is relevant in that it sheds light on the challenges the U.S. military faces in developing capabilities requirements, managing the associated risks, and implementing

real change to enable capabilities.¹¹ The challenges experienced in the irregular versus traditional debate will be the same challenges faced as we debate the role of GPFs along the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

Irregular Warfare

*As institutions, however, the U.S. armed forces have not been friendly either to irregular warfare or to their own would-be practitioners and advocates of what was regarded as the sideshow of unconventional warfare or counterinsurgency.*¹²

The Irregular Warfare Debate

The debate over the appropriate balance between traditional and irregular warfighting capability is a result of ongoing study, research, and dialogue as DoD attempts to develop concepts, define unique capabilities and skills, and determine service and interagency roles to improve proficiency for IW.¹³ The debate between IW and traditional warfare is not a new debate as pointed by author Andrew F. Krepinevich in his discussion of a similar debate that occurred after the Vietnam War.¹⁴ After Vietnam the U.S. shifted its military focus away from unconventional warfare to traditional warfare. The scale of warfare has remained weighted towards the traditional since 1975.

¹¹ U.S. Military being defined as joint forces and each individual Service as it contributes forces and capabilities to the Joint Force Commander.

¹² Colin S. Gray, "Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?" (U.S. Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2006), 42.

¹³ Traditional warfare simply defined in this context as state-on-state conflict involving armed forces and other instruments of national power (Economic, Diplomatic, and Information). Irregular warfare expands conflict to include violent struggle between state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population, The definition of IW is further defined on page 24 of this document.

¹⁴ Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

The debate surrounding IW is relevant today given the complexities of the strategic environment and the catastrophic effects a determined enemy(s) can yield.¹⁵ The IW debate is one the U.S. needs to pay attention to and for the security of the future, get as close to right as possible. The 2010 QDR has further upped the ante and expanded the range of capabilities required by our GPFs.

Irregular Warfare Focus to Date

Irregular warfare is not a new concept and certainly not new to the American military. In fact, American militias and “irregulars” waged IW against the British throughout the Colonies during the American Revolution.¹⁶ Just as Americans with limited resources and capability adapted the fight against superior British forces, today’s adversaries adapt their strategy, tactics, techniques and procedures to our traditional military methods of warfighting. This is a major lesson learned over the last two decades of conflict for the United States as adversaries have adapted to our traditional warfighting doctrine as applied in operations in Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

In addition to recent lessons learned over the past two decades and in particular during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), irregular warfare emerges as a consistent theme thrust into the forefront in various threat / vulnerability assessments and strategy documents.¹⁷ This focus on irregular warfare is

¹⁵ Complexity in terms of on-going complex operations in Afghanistan but also in terms of predicting future strategic threats.

¹⁶ Lynn Montross, *War Through the Ages*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1960), 420.

¹⁷ 2006 National Security Strategy, 2008 National Military Strategy, 2004 National Defense Strategy, Joint Forces Command Joint Operating Environment (JOE 2008), 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report.

driving the current debate and setting the stage for potential change to capabilities within the IW Core Mission Area and across other mission areas.¹⁸

Real emphasis was placed on IW following the convergence of three events in late 2006. These events were the release of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), lessons learned and acknowledgment by the Bush administration that the U.S. faced an insurgency in Iraq between 2004 and 2006, and the development of the surge strategy empowered by the “rediscovery” of counterinsurgency doctrine.¹⁹

Serious thought about irregular warfare gained ground during the preparation of the 2006 QDR. Following publication of the 2006 QDR, DoD initiated the process to further define IW and develop concepts that could be translated into capabilities. Executing the steps outlined in the Joint Operations Concept Development Process to accomplish identification of requirements and strategies to meet capability requirements has been a long and laborious process.²⁰ The 2006 QDR Irregular Warfare Roadmap and the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (IWJOC) were developed to help guide and inform the defense community on the direction our approach to achieving IW

¹⁸ Core Mission Areas as defined in the DoD Planning Framework used in developing capabilities requirements for the 2010 QDR and FY 11 Defense Budget. The framework is defined on page 7 of the January 2009 Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report. Core Mission Areas encompass the missions of Homeland Defense/Civil Support, Deterrence, Major Combat Operations, Irregular Warfare, and Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition and Reconstruction, and Military Contribution to Cooperative Security. Though not specifically stated, the author assumes that the Core Mission Areas would comprise and span what Secretary Gates calls the “widest possible spectrum of conflict.”

¹⁹ The U.S. Army – U.S. Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, U.S. Army (FM 3-24) – U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5. First released on 15 December 2006 and later published in book form by The Chicago Press in 2007. The publication of this document and the intellectual debate surrounding its development brought counterinsurgency approaches to the forefront.

²⁰ CJCS Instruction 3010.02B, “*Joint Operations Concept Development Process*,” Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, (Washington, D.C.: 27 January 2006).

proficiency would proceed.²¹ In addition, elevation of IW by placing it on an equal footing with the capability to execute traditional warfare was a key step in stressing the importance of achieving IW proficiency and reaching the proper balance between IW and traditional capability.

Dealing with the key strategic and joint issue of IW is one that will require new and innovative approaches. There are no simple solutions. Finding an acceptable way ahead has proven to be difficult given the complexity of the issue of balance, the wide debate and opinions about IW, and the tendency not to break from past practices. The consensus in 2006 was that determining the way ahead on IW would be difficult, but a way ahead must be chosen if capabilities were to be realized and threats addressed. As of April 2010, the debate continues and has now been expanded.

Scope and Methodology

This paper explores the concept of general purpose force adaptability and versatility in achieving balance along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Chapter 1 provides the introduction and frames the current problem. The overview of irregular warfare and the focus of the debate conducted to date, along with the unique challenges introduced by the 2010 QDR. This provides the reader with an appreciation for the complexities of the issues faced as the U.S. Secretary of Defense attempts to drive change in the way the defense community thinks, plans, and does business.

²¹ *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, Version 1.0.* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense. 11 September 2007). The Irregular Warfare Road Map is a classified document.

Chapter 2 defines the concept of balance as conveyed by the Secretary of Defense. This section will frame the challenges and hard decisions our country and leaders faced prior to the 2010 QDR in determining the way ahead for our nation's military. Chapter 2 will define balance and address the overarching issue of balance as proposed by Secretary Gates in 2009.

To further frame the current IW debate, Chapter 3 will review the genesis of our current thought on irregular warfare and will examine policy, guidance, and the work to date within Department of Defense (DoD) from the completion of the 2006 QDR to present. The conclusion of Chapter 3 will introduce the results of the 2010 QDR and highlight how the 2010 QDR seems to signal a shift in focus away from a narrower emphasis on IW and expands the challenge for the nation's general purpose forces to achieve maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

After covering the concept of balance and discussing IW in detail, Chapter 4 will provide historical examples to explain how we as a military arrived at the current crossroads in the IW versus traditional debate. Examining the era of the late 1980s and 1990s are critical to understanding the irregular warfare debate and how both our force structure and ways of thinking about the application of military power contributed to our military struggling to adapt to complex situations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The two decades-long focus on AirLand Battle and our emphasis on technology unarguably made the U.S. military the strongest traditional military force in the world. Despite this, as the strategic environment changed in the 1990s we failed to appreciate lessons learned in operations in Somalia, Haiti, and other places around the globe. As a military, we attempted to address shortcomings with an over-proliferation of doctrine to address

changing strategic environments we did not fully understand.²² Instead of thinking in new ways, we simply redefined ways to fit the military into regional and global situations in which other approaches were never seriously considered. Examining operations and highlighting missed lessons learned in the 1990s helps to explain how we arrived in the middle of two counterinsurgencies in 2005 struggling to adapt to complex and unfamiliar environments. As we strive to design and resource general purpose forces that are versatile, caution must be taken not to repeat the same mistakes made in the 1990s. There is more to change than simply updating doctrine to address the unknown.

Chapter 4 will also make the linkage between traditional-oriented doctrine, recent paradigms and concepts, and how a failure to fully assess the strategic environment resulted in near failure in Iraq during the initial stages of OIF. The Iraq case study will show how the war being fought by general purpose forces in Tel Afar, Iraq in 2004 highlight the adaptability and versatility of general purpose forces in a complex environment. This glimmer of success during a time of crisis in Iraq led to the Bush administration's policy change – one that put counterinsurgency doctrine at the forefront of a national strategy.²³ The events of 2004 – 2005 in Iraq eventually led to the re-emergence of counterinsurgency doctrine and elevated the focus on irregular warfare that fuels recent debate.²⁴ Research will show that whether recognized or not, U.S. general

²² For a discussion of military doctrine developed in the late 1980s and 1990s and doctrines impact on thought and planning for GPF roles in the post Cold-War environment, see Appendix A.

²³ The implementation of a counterinsurgency approach in Tal Afar Iraq, this unit commander's ability to articulate and adapt his unit to operating in this environment, the efforts of a number of leading experts / authors on counterinsurgency, all caused the Pentagon and the Bush administration to take note.

²⁴ Re-emergence of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine resulted from events in Iraq in late 2005, the 2006 QDR, and the efforts at the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center to re-invent and resurrect U.S. Counterinsurgency Doctrine.

purpose forces have a history of conducting complex operations in what is often initially planned and executed as conventional war.

Not addressed at length in the main body of this thesis is an element that cannot go unmentioned; the element of risk. Research shows that joint forces can and do adapt to unanticipated situations presented by irregular warfare and unanticipated environments. A number of factors influence the speed at which GPFs adapt. Forces generally prove to be versatile and adapt despite manning, training, equipping, and planning shortfalls. There are a number of variables in this equation that contribute to or mitigate closing this adaptability gap. For brevity and to remain within the scope of the thesis, the analysis of risk and the critical factors that impact our ability to achieve balance and versatility of GPFs as envisioned by the U.S. SECDEF are not discussed in detail in the main body of the author's thesis. The section on risk is important and included in the appendix for the reader to consider.

Findings

This thesis finds that general purpose forces are highly adaptable and versatile when placed in unanticipated and complex environments. The speed of adaptability is dependent on initial guidance / planning and understanding of the complexity of the environment when entering operations. The speed of adaptability and overall versatility of GPFs is also dependent on the time it takes to recognize and acknowledge change, leadership, and critical enablers that facilitate changes in operational and / or tactical approaches. Educated and informed leadership is one of the most important factors in driving GPFs to adapt to new situations. Research also found that doctrine alone is not

adequate to address the wide range of possible missions GPFs can be called on to respond to and that counterinsurgency doctrine remains relevant, but non-traditional thought and asymmetric approaches to the application of military power must be expanded.²⁵ Other findings include a shift with the 2010 QDR that expands the requirement to think beyond the recent conventional – irregular warfare argument in terms of GPF capability. The 2010 QDR and FY 11 Defense budget address needed short term capabilities and manpower issues but do not adequately address how in the mid-to-long term, GPFs will increase capability across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Achieving general purpose force capability and versatility in the mid-to-long term currently involves a significant amount of risk which must be addressed by DoD. True strategic thinking and the associated hard decisions that result are critical to breaking the paradigm of chasing lofty goals in the absence of a strategy.

²⁵ Planning and employment of ground maneuver forces typically revolves around the Army Brigade Combat Team or equivalent within the Marine Corps. With increased capabilities (enablers), we may need to consider thinking in terms of deploying smaller formations or tailored units to meet specific requirements along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. New joint organizational structures should be explored. An additional concern being debated is that GPFs cannot maintain proficiency in capabilities for traditional warfare and achieve proficiency in the other joint capability areas.

2. U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BALANCED STRATEGY

Irregular Warfare – A Major Form of Warfare

Irregular warfare is not a new problem. Irregular warfare is an old problem brought to light in the complex environments we face today. Lacking the conventional means to challenge the U.S. military, adversaries will resort to a combination of, or other indirect means to achieve their objectives. Future adversaries, either state or non-state actors, will employ irregular approaches to achieve their objectives. As we develop understanding and capability to address irregular warfare we must continually assess the environment and anticipate ways that adversaries will adapt. United States military history is full of examples of this “new” problem, the uncertainty and unpredictability of future war. Irregular warfare and the challenges this form of warfare presents in today’s strategic environment must be addressed. The need to address IW is clearly evident in light of recent lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan. Addressing IW capability is also critical, given the likelihood of irregular threats in the next ten to fifteen years. Assessment after assessment points to IW as being the pervasive form of warfare that a traditionally dominant U.S. military will most likely face. The question remains, can the U.S. achieve balance?

In addressing the IW issue, it is time to apply the concept of rapid-transformation to something other than conventional warfare-based billion dollar systems and platforms. In the looming era of limited resources for defense spending, military and civilian leaders must transform the approach to strategic problems and build on the experience of the force at hand while applying lessons of the past. Through this mental transformation,

true change can be effected within service cultures as we overcome a military reluctance to man, train, equip, and use general purpose forces in the execution of irregular warfare. The challenge is magnified as we attempt to expand GPF capabilities across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

Balance

The Imbalance between Traditional and Irregular Warfighting Capability

United States Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates, in his January/February 2009 *Foreign Affairs* article, “A Balanced Strategy,” made the observation that, “apart from the Special Forces community and some dissident colonels, however, for decades there has been no strong, deeply rooted constituency inside the Pentagon or elsewhere for institutionalizing the capabilities necessary to wage asymmetric or irregular conflict – and to quickly meet the ever-changing needs of forces engaged in these conflicts.”²⁶

Secretary Gates’ statement referenced an imbalance observed in the immediate and future warfighting capabilities of our armed forces - an imbalance brought painfully to light over the past six years as U.S. forces remained engaged in counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. In execution, thought, budgeting and programming, this imbalance stems from a military tradition of holding onto the familiar. It stems from a misunderstanding or lack of appreciation for the emerging strategic vulnerabilities presented by IW. It stems from each Service’s deeply rooted resistance to change at the risk of losing resources and influence within DoD. The past two decades focused on transforming the military with heavy emphasis on rapid deployment of conventional

²⁶ Robert M. Gates, “A Balanced Strategy, Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age.” *Foreign Affairs*, (January/February 2009), 28.

capability and on technology to meet emerging threats.²⁷ Granted, our military has transformed, but has it changed? Events in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past few years indicate we can change, but can we change fast enough to correct imbalances in capability; fast enough to meet the next unforeseen threat?

The imbalance Secretary Gates observes is the result of a lack of change in the armed forces, defense contractors - procurement establishment, and Congress. As the strategic vulnerabilities facing the U.S. change, the defense community continues to lag in changing focus. The defense community and stakeholders are resistant to divesting resources and focus from procurement and internalization of conventional minded warfighting capability and programs, to one that is more aligned with the predominantly identified current and future threat our military faces – irregular warfare. To further stress his observation, Secretary Gates pointed out in early 2009, “the base budget (Defense Budget) for fiscal year 2009, for example contains more than \$180 billion for procurement, research, and development, the overwhelming preponderance of which is for conventional systems.”²⁸

Finding the Proper Balance

Abandoning our military superiority in conventional warfare would be absurd. On the other hand, swinging the pendulum too far in favor of irregular warfare to meet the strategic vulnerabilities posed by only irregular threats is equally dangerous. How to

²⁷ Transformation during the Rumsfeld Era centered on the application of technology to increase lethality, precision, and defeat adversaries with smaller, more lethal - rapidly mobile formations.

²⁸ Robert M. Gates, “A Balanced Strategy, Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age.” *Foreign Affairs*, (January/February 2009), 28.

accomplish a balance is hotly debated within the U.S. government and military. Fixes to achieve balance are being proposed across a wide range of possible options. From force structure changes, to the changing of traditional service roles and responsibilities, to new doctrine and massive reform in government capacity, it seems everyone has an opinion on how balance can be achieved. The large number of stakeholders involved make this an extremely hard issued to address, gain consensus, and move forward on. Failure to gain consensus and implement change in a timely manner puts our military forces and most importantly, our nation at risk.

In early 2009, Secretary Gates proposed a departure from the current preoccupation of preparing for future conventional conflict and striking a balance between our existing conventional capabilities and the unconventional capabilities required to meet current strategic vulnerabilities.²⁹ Striking this balance will entail more than the transformation of fighting through the use of precision weapons and technology as we attempted in the recent past. Striking this balance will take real change. Key to meeting this challenge will be how successfully we assess and articulate the acceptable risks our nation is willing to accept on the conventional side, while making real change to address the unconventional or irregular side of warfare and other points along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Past paradigms and history are not on our side. So, is this balance achievable?

²⁹ Ibid, 28.

3. DEFINING IRREGULAR WARFARE – CONCEPT TO CAPABILITY

Joint concepts link strategic guidance to the development and employment of future joint force capabilities and serves as “engines for transformation” that may ultimately lead to doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, and education, personal, and facilities (DOTMLPF) and policy changes.³⁰

Introduction

The intent of this chapter is to discuss irregular warfare concept development as it evolved through the Joint Operations Concept Development Process (JOpsC-DP). This three-year deliberate process synchronizes the efforts of the joint concept community in the DoD capabilities-based approach to transformation as outlined in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3020.02B.³¹ The goal of the JOpsC-DP is to develop a detailed description of how future joint operations may be conducted and provides the conceptual basis for joint experimentation and capabilities-based assessments (CBAs). As outlined in the Chairman’s instruction, “the outcomes of experimentation and CBA will underpin investment decisions leading to the development of new military capabilities beyond the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP).”³² This section discusses the key steps in the process as IW migrates from concept to the ultimate goal, a balanced force that can adequately meet both traditional and irregular threats. Review of the IW process from concept to capability is important in understanding the current debate and how change does or does not occur. Understanding of the process and actions

³⁰ CJCS Instruction 3010.02B, “*Joint Operations Concept Development Process*,” Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, (Washington, D.C.: 27 January 1006), 1.

³¹ The CJCS process outlined in CJCS Instruction 3010.02B , defines the process for guiding the transformation of the joint force so that it is prepared to operate successfully 8 to 20 years in the future.

³² CJCS Instruction 3010.02B, “*Joint Operations Concept Development Process*,” Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, (Washington, D.C.: 27 January 1006), 1.

to date will inform the reader of current thoughts and findings on the role GPFs may have in irregular warfare. Understanding this process and current outcomes is also critical to understanding what role IW will play in future force planning and strategy; and the larger challenges associated with achieving balance along the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

Key Guidance and Concepts – Moving Towards Capability

2005 National Defense Strategy and the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review – Strategic Guidance and Irregular Warfare

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review's foundation was provided by the National Defense Strategy published in March 2005. The 2005 version of the National Defense Strategy recognized that, "we are confronting fundamentally different challenges from those faced by the American defense establishment in the Cold War and previous eras."³³ The 2005 National Defense Strategy introduced four "capabilities and methods" that threaten U.S. interests. There were identified and categorized as traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive.

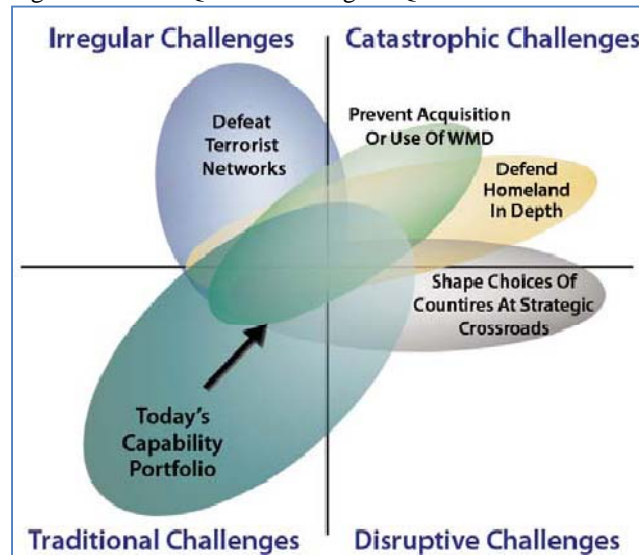
During the 2006 QDR process, DoD senior leaders identified four priority areas to help operationalize the National Defense Strategy:

- 1) Defeating terrorist networks
- 2) Defending the homeland in depth
- 3) Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads
- 4) Preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction (WMD)

³³ Department of Defense, "The National Defense Strategy of the United States," Department of Defense, (Washington, D.C.: March 2005), iii.

The diagram in Figure 1 shows the inter-related areas between the four identified threat capabilities and methods, the four priority areas examined during the 2006 QDR, and the capabilities needed to address the challenges.

Figure 1. 2006 QDR “Challenges” Quad Chart



Source: Quadrennial Defense Review, February 6, 2006, page, 19. DoD shifting of the portfolio of capabilities to address irregular, catastrophic, disruptive challenges while sustaining capabilities to address traditional challenges.

The updated 2008 National Defense Strategy did not drastically depart from the 2006 interpretation of the strategic environment. It did however highlight two important ideas that built on the concepts presented in the 2006 QDR. The ideas included in 2008 were a restated and renewed focus on the irregular threats and the concept of the prolonged irregular campaigns. The later concept is often referred to as the “long war.”³⁴ Operationally, the emphasis and focus in addressing irregular warfare in the 2006 QDR remained centered on defeating terrorist networks.

In a review of the 2006 QDR as a new strategic framework for setting priorities and allocating risk, author and defense expert Michele Flournoy pointed out:

³⁴ Department of Defense, “*The National Defense Strategy of the United States*,” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, June 2008).

The central thesis of the QDR was that the Defense Department has unsurpassed capabilities to meet traditional challenges, such as defeating an adversary's military forces in a conventional campaign, but lacks the capabilities needed to deal with the full range of non-traditional threats that are likely to define key elements of the future global security environment.³⁵

In retrospect, broad thinking on how to achieve IW capability was lacking in 2006. One shortcoming of the 2006 QDR is that it focused irregular warfare specifically on defeating terrorist networks. The 2006 QDR addressed the need to strengthen forces to defeat terrorist networks with emphasis placed on a 15 percent increase in U.S. Special Operations Forces with corresponding increases in psychological operations and civil affairs. Casual mention was given to the GPF roles and capabilities to fight irregular warfare in stating, "multi-purpose Army and Marine Corps ground forces will increase their capabilities and capacity to conduct irregular warfare."³⁶

As of early 2010, it appears that the focus has now changed and expanded. As focus, debate, concept development and experimentation have progressed since the 2006 QDR, thought about irregular warfare has expanded to thinking beyond defeating terrorist networks. Further examination of IW concept development will highlight this transformation in thought.

³⁵Michele A. Flournoy, "Did the Pentagon Get the Quadrennial Defense Review Right?" *The Washington Quarterly*, (Spring 2006), 70.

³⁶Department of Defense, "*Quadrennial Defense Review*," Department of Defense, (Washington, D.C.: February 6, 2008), 5. Missing was how this would occur.

2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Irregular Warfare Roadmap

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Irregular Warfare Roadmap (IW Roadmap) was signed on April 28, 2006, by Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England. The IW Roadmap is a classified document. An in-depth review and analysis of tasks and directives contained in the IW Roadmap was not feasible given its security classification. Assessing the contents of the IW Roadmap would be helpful in gaining an understanding of IW concept development and mainstream thought on IW within DoD following the release of the 2006 QDR. Some analysis of the IW Roadmap can be conducted by examining the September 27, 2006 congressional testimony concerning the IW Roadmap.³⁷

Statements made by DoD civilian and military leaders before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee provide insight into the concepts and planned steps being initiated by the IW Roadmap to address the question of IW capacity and capability.³⁸ Important to note is the timing of this testimony in late 2006. In the fall of 2006 the U.S. was coming to grips with the insurgency in Iraq. The Bush Administration was searching for a strategy to address what appeared at that time to be a losing effort in Iraq. Concurrently, Congress was pressing the Administration and

³⁷ The Irregular Warfare Roadmap - Hearing before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, One Hundred Ninth Congress, Second Session, September 27, 2006. (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 2008).

³⁸ Honorable Mario Mancuso, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict; Vice Admiral Eric T. Olsen, Deputy Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command; and Brigadier General Otis G. Mannon, Deputy Director, Special Operations, J-3, Joint Staff.

military leaders for specific metrics for measuring success in Iraq.³⁹ All of these are resident in the tone of the testimony as are the implied expectations by members of the House Subcommittee that the IW Roadmap will lead to concrete changes in IW-related defense programs between 2008 and 2013.

Examination of the testimony shows that House Subcommittee members still viewed irregular warfare as tied directly to the “global war on terror.”⁴⁰ Admiral Eric T. Olsen, then Deputy Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, highlighted that a key point in defining IW was remembering what irregular warfare is not. He stated that, “it [irregular warfare] is not a list of units that conduct irregular warfare...not a list of capabilities for irregular warfare...not a list of weapons systems for irregular warfare.”⁴¹ Admiral Olsen pointed out repeatedly that IW is more about what is done with capabilities, units, and systems. He also stressed to members of the Subcommittee in addressing IW activities, that, “many of those activities are squarely in the domain of other agencies of our government and in the domain of coalition forces and coalition nations in a global campaign.”⁴² Admiral Olsen also stressed that the IW Roadmap is “not a campaign plan or a guiding document for the global war on terror.”⁴³ Most

³⁹ President Bush addressed the U.S. people on the evening of January 10, 2007, announcing a strategy change in Iraq. The President announced the commitment of an additional 20,000 U.S. troops. This was commonly referred to by the press as “the surge.”

⁴⁰ Opening statement by Honorable Jim Saxton, Representative from New Jersey, Chairman, Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee.

⁴¹ The Irregular Warfare Roadmap, Hearing before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, One Hundred Ninth Congress, Second Session, September 27, 2006. (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 2008). 3.

⁴² Ibid, 3.

⁴³ Ibid, 4.

importantly, Admiral Olsen informed the Subcommittee members that the IW Roadmap was an implementing document that would allow DoD to follow through on decisions made during the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review and to provide resourcing guidance to the services and the Special Operations Command within the Department of Defense.⁴⁴

Secretary Mario Mancuso, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, ASD (SOLIC), echoed Admiral Olsen's statements. He highlighted to the Committee that the IW Roadmap contained approximately 30 tasks that would be implemented over the next year to improve ability to conduct IW. The IW Roadmap "has begun to provide senior leadership with a mechanism to advance high-priority issues for decisions through the fiscal year 2008 to 2013 defense program."⁴⁵ When pressed for specifics on how the IW Roadmap and its approaches were working in Iraq and Afghanistan, Secretary Mancuso stressed that the IW Roadmap was more about "how we can get better and how we can institutionalize some of the best practices." The message sent to Congress was that the IW Roadmap would drive change within the Services to increase the capability and capacity to conduct irregular warfare.

Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept

The IW Roadmap required the development of a joint concept for irregular warfare. The Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (IW JOC) was developed to

⁴⁴ Ibid, 4. The IW Roadmap did not drive resourcing decisions in the FY 07-08 Defense Budgets that significantly enhanced IW capability for GPFs.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 6.

meet the requirement outlined in the IW Roadmap and described “how joint forces operate” in order to tie together the application of many of the requirements identified in the IW Roadmap and as part of the Joint Operations Concept Development Process (JOpsC-DP).⁴⁶ Development of the IW JOC was a key step in progressing toward defining the requirements needed to meet the challenges of irregular warfare. The purpose of the IW JOC is to:⁴⁷

- 1) Describe how the future joint force commander could conduct protracted IW to accomplish national strategic objectives in the 2014-2026 timeframe.
- 2) Provide a guide for the development and integration of DoD military concepts and capabilities for waging protracted IW on a regional or global scale against hostile threats or armed groups.
- 3) Provide a basis for further IW discussion, debate, and experimentation intended to influence subsequent IW concept and capability development.
- 4) Influence joint and Service combat development processes by helping the joint force gain a better appreciation for IW challenges that will result in doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facility (DOTMLPF) changes.

The IW JOC influences thinking about irregular warfare and provides a means to inform the joint community on how the joint force is expected to conduct joint operations within joint campaigns in the future. As one of the six Core Mission Areas conducted by joint forces, defining irregular warfare requirements and building the capability to execute are critical to the process of applying GPF capabilities along the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

⁴⁶ Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, version 1.0., (September 11, 2007).

⁴⁷ Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, version 1.0., (September 11, 2007), 6.

Identification and institutionalization of IW skills and abilities are critical to achieving balance and attaining the adaptability and versatility desired in GPFs. Services, Congress, and the defense community must have the will to make the necessary changes. Secretary Gates, through his 2010 QDR and FY 11 Defense budget request, appear to signal OSDs will to change. The challenge now is to gain buy-in from the Services and support from Congress. Key to moving forward will be how well DOD defines the IW threat and gains consensus on the need to change the defense portfolio toward IW and other missions along the spectrum of conflict – and being able to initiate and sustain required change while engaged in persistent conflict and managing competing resources.

Irregular Warfare Defined

The 2006 Irregular Warfare JOC defined Irregular Warfare as: “A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will.”⁴⁸ As a form of warfare, IW replaces low-intensity conflict. In addition to defining irregular warfare, the IW JOC also lists operations and activities that comprise IW. The IW JOC noted that operations could occur in isolation or within traditional warfare. Operations and activities that comprise IW as outlined in the 2006 IW JOC are:⁴⁹

- 1) Insurgency

⁴⁸ Irregular Warfare as a form of conflict replaces the term “Low-Intensity Conflict.”

⁴⁹ *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, version 1.0., (September 11, 2007), 10. The updated IW JOC, version 1.9, dated 10 December 2009, further focuses IW activities as: stability operations, foreign internal defense, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and unconventional warfare.

- 2) Counterinsurgency (COIN)
- 3) Unconventional warfare (UW)
- 4) Terrorism
- 5) Counterterrorism (CT)
- 6) Foreign internal defense (FID)
- 7) Stabilization, security, transition, and reconstruction operations
- 8) Strategic communications (STRATCOM)
- 9) Psychological operations (PSYOP)
- 10) Information operations (IO)

Department of Defense Directive 3000.07 (DoDD 3000.07)

The overall desired end state is a joint force with enhanced capability for IW and a balanced approach to warfighting that allows the joint force to be as compelling in IW as it is in conventional warfare.⁵⁰

On December 1, 2008, DoD issued Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) Number 3000.07, *Irregular Warfare*. Applicable to OSD and all of DoD, Directive Number 3000.07 established policy and assigned responsibility for DoD conduct of IW and development of capabilities to address irregular warfare challenges to national security. This directive was significant in that it implemented DoD policy of “recognizing that IW is as strategically important as traditional warfare.”⁵¹ DoDD 3007.07 also issued a number of directives aimed at increasing the capability and capacity to conduct IW independently of, or in combination with, traditional warfare.

DoDD Number 3000.07 assigned the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (ASD(SOLIC&IC)) as the principal civilian advisor to the SECDEF for IW. Along with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ASD(SOLIC&IC) is responsible to provide policy oversight to insure that DOD maintains capabilities and capacity so that DoD is as effective in IW as

⁵⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁵¹ Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.07, (December 1, 2008), 2.

it is in traditional warfare.⁵² This is a daunting job as the Defense Community labors to determine the requirements to meet capabilities and capacity. Identifying IW-related requirements for steady state, surge campaigns, and contingency plans is a responsibility assigned to Combatant Commanders per this directive.

DoDD Number 3000.07 directed Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command (CDRUSJFCOM) to lead or direct a number of IW related tasks. Per this directive, CDRUSJFCOM is responsible to lead the collaborative development of joint doctrine, conduct joint concept development and experimentation, lead the effort to develop joint standards for general purpose force IW-relevant training and readiness for individuals and units (with the Secretaries of the Military Departments), and assist in identifying tracking requirements for critical skills and experiences relevant to IW. Commander Joint Forces Command is also tasked to lead the identification of joint IW-relevant capabilities and recommend priorities for capability development to ASD(SOLIC&IC) and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and submit an annual assessment of U.S. Armed Forces' GPF proficiency and readiness for IW to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁵³ All tasks are to be executed in coordination with Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command and the Secretaries of the Military Departments.

Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (CDRUSSOCOM) responsibilities are to assist the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by coordinating the development of those aspects of special operations forces (SOF) doctrine relevant to IW, contribute to the integration of SOF-general purpose forces (GPF) IW-relevant doctrine,

⁵² Ibid, 5.

⁵³ Responsibilities as assigned to CDRUSJFCOM in Department of Defense Directive Number 3000.07, (December 1, 2008), 10.

lead the development of SOF IW-relevant training and education standards for individuals. United States Special Operations Command was also tasked to develop SOF capabilities for extending U.S. reach into denied areas and uncertain environments by operating with and through indigenous foreign forces or by conducting low-visibility operations. Lastly, CDRUSSOCOM is to submit an annual assessment of SOF proficiency and readiness for IW to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁵⁴ All tasks are to be executed in coordination with Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command and the Secretaries of the Military Departments.

DoDD 3000.07 resulted from the findings of the Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review that found despite gains made since the 2006 QDR, DoD efforts to transform capabilities to address IW were not uniform across all of the Department of Defense. The intent of DoDD 3000.07 was to provide a policy framework and attempt to designate responsibilities across DoD so that progress could be made. Unfortunately, as evidenced in this directive, our approach to capability development still resides within the individual Services with little or no influence beyond informing from OSD.

Integrating Core Mission Areas & Core Competencies into DoD Processes and Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review – Attempting to Focus Capabilities

To balance risk and manage strategic capabilities, DoD expanded its use of integrated capability portfolios following the 2006 QDR. To execute this framework, DoD organized leadership and oversight for managing capability portfolios around nine Core Competencies / Joint Capability Areas (JCAs). The use of JCAs as part of an integrated portfolio management framework was validated as the FY 09 Defense Budget

⁵⁴ Responsibilities as assigned to CDRUSSOCOM in Department of Defense Directive Number 3000.07, (December 1, 2008), 9-10.

was developed. All nine JCAs were considered in the development of the budget. Specific program elements were linked to appropriate lead and supporting JCA portfolios. Oversight responsibility for each of the JCAs was assigned to a Senate confirmed official who was paired with a senior military co-lead.

The Core Competencies / Joint Capability Areas structure is now a significant part of the Department's requirements process and the Joint Capability Integration Development System directs that all requirements documents be associated with appropriate JCAs. The goal of this framework is to manage capabilities and balance risk in achieving the Department of Defense and Nation's strategic end states. This framework also guides and informs the functions assigned to each of the Services. As outlined in Figure 2, *Department of Defense Framework for Quadrennial Roles and Missions (QRM)*, service roles and functions will be strategy-based and driven by JCA and Core Mission Area (CMA) capability requirements. Service roles and functions will also be driven by the supply-based requirements to support on-going and anticipated operations within each of the DoD Core Mission Areas.

*As the Department fully integrates the Core Competencies / Joint Capability Areas structure, it will be able to better illustrate capability investments across the Department.*⁵⁵

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, "*Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report*." (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense; January 2009), 7. www.defense.gov. www.defense.gov/news/Jan2009/QRMFinalReport_v26Jan.pdf (accessed February 14, 2010).

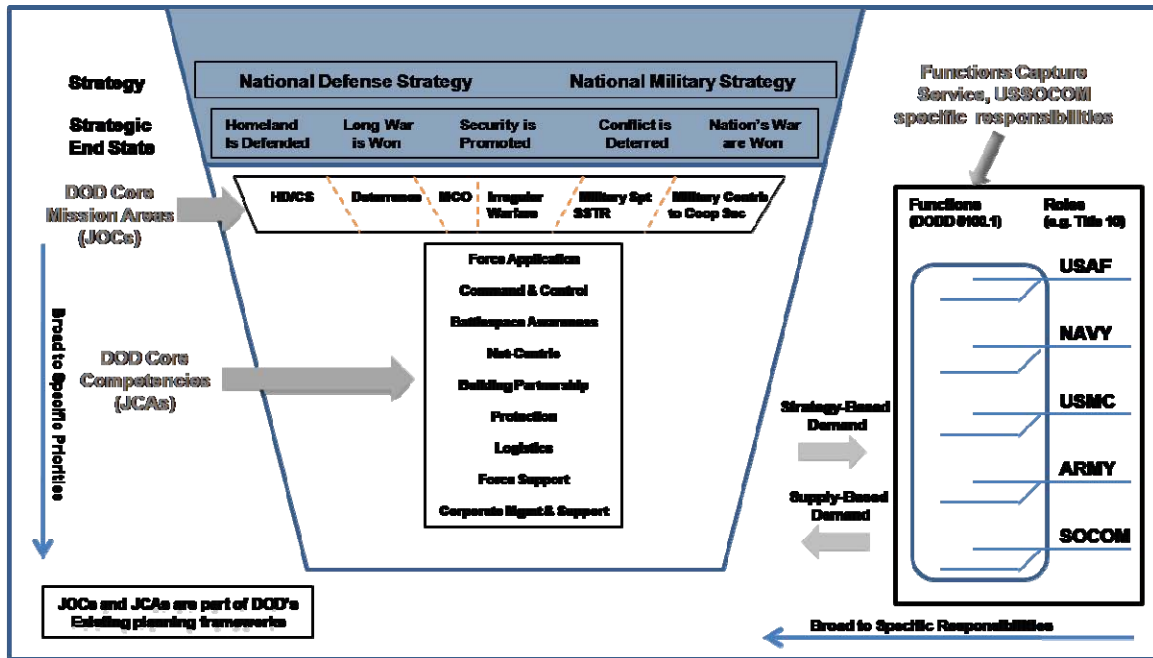


Figure 2: Department of Defense Framework for the Quadrennial Roles and Missions.
Source: Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report, January 2009, p. 3.

2010 Quadrennial Defense Review – Balance along the Widest Possible Spectrum of Conflict.

Strategy driven through assessment of a number of emerging security environments and various ways in which U.S. forces may be called on to protect the nation's interests, the 2010 QDR set out to "further rebalance the capabilities of America's armed forces to prevail in today's war, while building the capabilities needed to deal with future threats."⁵⁶ One central theme in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review is the call to balance capabilities: Balancing to meet today's conflicts and balancing capabilities to meet future security environments. Before embarking further on the debate surrounding irregular warfare, the historical case study, and determining findings and

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, "Quadrennial Defense Review Report, February 2010." (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense), www.defense.gov/QDR/images/QDR_as_of_12_Feb10_1000.pdf (accessed February 14, 2010). iii.

recommendations, it is important to understand the linkage between the current QDR, the National Security Strategy, and the National Defense Strategy. Also, it is important to grasp the updated or expanded concept of balance as stated in the 2010 QDR. An appreciation of these underlying concepts will assist the reader in understanding the challenges of defining and achieving capabilities required by future GPFs.

The 2010 QDR analysis reinforced and further defined the priority missions for the Department of Defense. As stated in the recent QDR Report, “analysis suggested that the Department must further rebalance its policy, doctrine, and capabilities to better support the following key missions:⁵⁷

- 1) Defend the United States and support civil authorities at home.
- 2) Succeed in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations.
- 3) Build the security capacity of partner states.
- 4) Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments.
- 5) Prevent proliferation and counter weapons of mass destruction.
- 6) Operate effectively in cyberspace.

One important observation to note is that the analysis done in preparation for the 2010 QDR and the refinement and focus on the six key missions and six DoD Core Mission Areas (the author equates the CMAs as encompassing the widest possible spectrum of conflict) are what seem to have widened the capabilities focus beyond simply that of traditional and IW.

The 2010 QDR identifies six key missions as the areas of particular attention that need focus today and in the future. The report also recognizes that these six missions do not fully capture the various ways military forces can be used. The 2010 QDR process in essence identified gaps and short-falls in capabilities required to accomplish the six

⁵⁷ Ibid, 2.

priority missions. Proposals were developed and vetted along with cost estimates developed to close capability gaps. Based on this information, the SECDEF issued guidance to each DoD component. This guidance is reportedly what drove the development of the FY 2011 Defense budget proposal and the DoD Future Year Defense Plan (FYDP) FY 2011-2015.⁵⁸

It is also important to note that the six key missions as listed in the 2010 QDR are consistent with the last administration's National Security Strategy (NSS 2006) and the last version of the National Defense Strategy (NDS 2008). The 2008 NDS listed five key objectives to supporting the NSS. The five objectives were: defend the homeland, win the long war, promote security, deter conflict and win our nation's wars.⁵⁹ Although the end states as articulated appear to be nested, what is lacking is the current administration's strategic guidance that informs the rest of the nation's strategic security goals and objectives.⁶⁰ Without clear articulation of the current administration's strategy we have to assume that DoD understands the direction set by the President and his national security team. The assumption will also have to be made that the 2010 QDR supports the nation's overall strategic direction. Within this overall strategic framework, the current defense budget was developed accordingly with the stated intent to balance capabilities across the widest possible spectrum of conflict by properly balancing resources and risk.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, "*National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*." (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, June 2008), 6.

⁶⁰ Referenced here is an updated National Security Strategy. The NSS is reported to have been developed in parallel with DoD's work on the 2010 QDR. As of April 2010, the NSS has not been published. The Obama Administration NSS continues to be informed by policy decision, statements, speeches, and actions.

In assessing balance as a strategy, the 2010 QDR is consistent with the SECDEF's earlier statements on the concept and need to balance. Following the SECDEF's 2009 statements and the release of *A Balanced Strategy* in the January / February issue of Foreign Affairs, much of the balance debate centered on that which was fresh in our memory due to our current fight in Iraq, the unconventional and irregular. Balancing capability between traditional and irregular was the initial focus until mid-2009.

In conducting this research it became apparent that over a period of a year (2009) two things may have occurred with the balance concept. The Department of Defense, and in particular Secretary Gates, further refined the concept of balance between early 2009 and the release of the 2010 QDR. Refinement would have occurred as a result of ongoing 2010 QDR analysis informing and updating the capabilities requirements. The other dynamic that may have occurred was that it took over a year to articulate the balance concept as first envisioned by the Secretary of Defense. From January 2009 to February 2010, in speeches and action, the Secretary stressed to the overall defense community and its stakeholders that balance encompassed much more than simply balancing capability between traditional and irregular means. The 2010 QDR articulates the breadth and depth of the balance strategy and clearly expands the concept of balance across all of DoD. The QDR as a strategy expands the focus of balance on meeting capability requirements to address the widest possible spectrum of conflict in the future while prevailing in today's conflict.

For general purpose force capability requirements, the balance strategy is critical to understand as forces must be prepared to meet strategic threats across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Services must be able to define capabilities (either strategy

or supply based) required and in turn balance requirements and mitigate risk across this widest possible spectrum of conflict. In order to manage this, the national security apparatus and DoD will have to define what the widest possible spectrum of conflict is and insure the joint force is prepared to meet anticipated threats or focused accordingly as threats along this spectrum of conflict change. So what is the widest possible spectrum of conflict?

The widest possible spectrum of conflict is not specifically defined in the 2010 QDR. For the purpose of this work the assumption will be made that the widest possible spectrum of conflict encompasses the range of strategic end states or objectives as articulated in the 2008 NDS and in Figure 2 that depicts the DoD Framework for the Quadrennial Defense Roles and Missions. The six key missions are consistent with the DoD Core Mission Areas (CMAs). The CMAs as well encompass a wide range of missions that support DoD strategic end states. The strategic end states and CMAs inform what encompasses the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

The United States cannot expect to eliminate national security risks through higher defense budgets, to do everything and buy everything.⁶¹

Initial thoughts on the 2010 QDR raise the question of our ability to balance along this widest possible spectrum of conflict. Emphasis is placed on identifying capabilities gaps and shortfalls to meet current and future requirements. Programs have been cancelled or modified in the effort to rebalance and direct resources into needed capabilities, enablers, and programs. Time will tell if these moves truly assist in the effort to balance future capability or if they are simply short term concessions or trade-

⁶¹ Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy, Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age." *Foreign Affairs*, (January/February 2009), 31.

offs to meet immediate warfighting needs. Cancellation of the F-22, DDG-1000, Future Combat System (vehicle), ending of the C-17 production line, delay of the Navy's Command Ship Replacement Program, cancellation of the CG(X) and the Net Enabled Command and Control Program are cited as measures driven by the new balance strategy to free up resources that are needed to address required capabilities or capability gaps that exist within our force.⁶²

The 2010 QDR states that "successful rebalancing requires that the Department make hard choices on the level of resources required as well as accepting and managing risk in a way that favors success in today's wars."⁶³ The QDR also states that "U.S. forces must be prepared to conduct a wide variety of missions under a range of different circumstances" and in statements on February 1, 2010, Secretary Gates said, "The departments' leadership now recognizes that we must prepare for a much broader range of security challenges on the horizon...we have learned through painful experience that the wars we fight are seldom the wars we planned. As a result the U.S. needs a broad portfolio of military capabilities with maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict."⁶⁴

The question left unanswered in the strategic sense is whether or not the important hard choices have actually been made? What are the missions the U.S. military must be

⁶² Programs announced for delay or cancellation by the U.S. Secretary of Defense in an April 6, 2009, "*Defense Budget Recommendation Statement*" given in Arlington, Virginia. These were also reiterated in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review.

⁶³ U.S. Department of Defense, "*Quadrennial Defense Review Report, February 2010.*" (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense). www.defense.gov/QDR/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf (accessed February 14, 2010), vii.

⁶⁴ Robert M. Gates, statement made while announcing the release of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1416, (accesses February 14, 2010).

prepared for and can they be prioritized? The 2010 QDR does not specifically answer this question but instead sets out to focus on required capabilities of forces to meet current and emerging threats across the **widest possible** (yet not clearly articulated) spectrum of conflict. The future being too complex to predict, it appears our strategy will be to prepare for everything by focusing on anticipated capabilities required of future GPFs as well as key enablers to build on current capabilities.

Will balancing resources and risk to increase capability in focused areas and linking assessments (capability gaps and shortcomings) to the budget process, hedge against current risks and possible contingencies? Do we have the resources and necessary focus to grow capability across the nation's general purpose force while concurrently prevailing in today's wars, preventing and deterring conflicts, preparing to defeat adversaries and succeeding in a wide range of contingencies, and preserving and enhance the All-Volunteer Force? Can we afford this strategy of balancing to prepare for all contingencies and do we have processes that are clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders that allow us to be agile enough move from concept to capability? The priorities will show as the FY 2011 Defense Budget is analyzed in detail and future years defense budgets and programs are developed.

Returning to irregular warfare and looking at specific focus on irregular warfare capability, the 2010 QDR backs away from the strong language used in the 2006 QDR. The emphasis on IW in the 2006 QDR was most likely due to timing as the nation was struggling with a growing insurgency in Iraq. Debate about counterinsurgency and IW was fresh in the minds of many; therefore irregular warfare became the rallying cry. On page iv and vii of the 2006 QDR, in an attempt to characterize the nature of how DoD is

transforming, the authors of the 2006 QDR stated it was useful to view transformation and change within DoD to meet the new strategic environment as a shift of emphasis. Of the thirty-five examples of the shift in emphasis listed in the 2006 QDR Report, the shift “from major conventional combat operations – to multiple irregular, asymmetric operations” is listed.”⁶⁵ The 2006 QDR went on to highlight irregular warfare and irregular operations over 41 times in the report. In comparison, the 2010 QDR uses the term irregular warfare once. In fact, the only reference to irregular warfare is not in the QDR Report itself but is found in the concluding pages in The Chairman’s Assessment of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review. In this section the Chairman states, “I also strongly endorse the QDR’s efforts to address joint force readiness for the full range of challenges we face, the focus on building joint force capability and capacity for irregular warfare without compromising our conventional and nuclear superiority.”⁶⁶

The closest reference in the 2010 QDR to irregular warfare as it was used in context in the 2006 QDR is perhaps captured in the key mission of succeeding in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations. Referencing IW in this way seems to signal a shift or maturity in how we think of irregular warfare. One conclusion to be made is that the current concept of irregular warfare does not adequately capture the anticipated complexities of future adversaries and future warfare. As we begin to understand the complex characteristics of warfare today, perhaps we are learning the lessons of the past two decades and realizing that the lines between conventional and irregular are becoming less distinguishable; realizing that irregular can occur within a

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, “*The Quadrennial Defense Review Report*.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2006), vii.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 102-103.

conventional fight or concurrent with other activities as seen in what has been referred to as hybrid warfare.⁶⁷

It appears that irregular warfare has been relegated to a subset of capabilities required to meet the Irregular Warfare Core Mission Area. Irregular warfare may simply be a point on this widest possible spectrum of conflict or it may be an approach applicable at many points along the spectrum. Regardless, as we work to define and enable capabilities envisioned in the 2010 QDR, there are lessons to be learned and applied as we have struggled with the question of balance and irregular warfare between 2005 and early 2010. Assessment of how we have attempted to address IW, assessing how we have changed or failed to change and adapt in the past, and understanding how change occurred and what influenced our ability to adapt is important as we attempt further change to adapt GPFs versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

⁶⁷ Hybrid conflicts defined as full spectrum wars with both physical and conceptual dimensions. Physical defined as the struggle against an armed enemy. The conceptual defined as the wider struggle for control and support of the contested area's population, the support of public support of the intervening country, and the support of the international community. Conflict encompasses elements of traditional and irregular warfare as well as high-tech conventional weaponry employed in asymmetric ways. See "Hybrid Wars," by John J. McCuen, *Military Review*. (March-April 2008), 107-113.

4. IRREGULAR WARFARE – HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CURRENT PARADIGM

A Tradition of Irregular Warfare

Defense Debates and Strategic Direction - Getting it Wrong

At various times throughout our nation's history similar debates about emerging threats and appropriate force and capability have taken place. One such instance was the period immediately following the Korean War.

After the Korean War, the Eisenhower administration ushered in the *New Look Strategy*. *New Look* was a defense strategy centered on the use of strategic and tactical nuclear forces. This strategy was fiercely debated between then Chief of Staff of the Army, General Maxwell D. Taylor and the Eisenhower Administration.⁶⁸ The debate became one of nuclear versus conventional forces. An underlying factor that led to the imbalance toward nuclear force was the need to decrease the military budget from \$41.9 billion in 1954 (the end of the Korean War). Military budget cuts were implemented by President Truman to address domestic issues in the U.S. economy and to bring deficit spending under control.⁶⁹

In the end, an imbalance was created between conventional and nuclear forces that lasted into the early 1960s. This imbalance was manifest in force structure, research

⁶⁸Robert T. Davis, "Army Adaptation in the Aftermath of Conflict, 1953-2000; *The Long War Series Occasional Paper 27*." (Fort Leavenworth Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 26.

⁶⁹ Richard M. Leighton, "Strategy, Money, and the New Look 1953-1956." (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2001), 65-67. The FY 54 budget reflected military build-ups as a result of the Korean War and was projected to create a \$9.9 billion deficit. The cumulative deficit for war time orders was estimated to reach \$57 billion by mid-1957.

and development, procurement, and training. The nuclear strategy won out under pressure to bring wartime deficits under control and a belief that the nuclear capabilities and threat of nuclear retaliation were adequate to deter the Soviet threat. As noted by Bacevich in his book, The Pentomic Era, by FY57 nuclear weapons and missile research and development accounted for 43 percent of the Army's research and development budget while only 15 percent was being spent for vehicles, artillery, and aviation combined.⁷⁰ Imbalance became all too evident as the U.S. entered the 1960s. Lacking the ability to meet emerging threats, the Kennedy Administration created U.S. Special Operations Forces as an immediate measure to fill a capabilities gap.⁷¹

The 1990s – Launching Without Strategic Thought

*Americans entered the Clinton administration with a lot of hope about an outside world where so many positives had emerged with the end of the Cold War. The United States was the sole military superpower; what could go wrong?*⁷²

The ending of major wars and dawning of an era where certainty suddenly becomes the unknown, often ushers in a period in which important past lessons learned are lost and strategic opportunities missed. Failing to understand the strategic environment and how to address it often leads to a period of painful discovery or rediscovery as nations grapple to understand just how environments have changed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States entered into one of these periods of uncertainty. Wed to the success of Desert Storm at the beginning of the 1990s, driven by

⁷⁰ A. J. Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era - the U. S. Army Between Korea and Vietnam*. (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1986).

⁷¹ Dale R. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency – Civil Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush*. (Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 2005), 141.

⁷² Thomas P.M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map - War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century*. (Barcelona: Putnam, 2004), 32.

the promises of a revolution in military affairs through technology, and lacking in strategic thought, the United States government entered into a decade of making the world safe for democracy.

Military – The Instrument of Power in the 1990s.

Within the military, the decade of the 1990s began with a hundred-hour war in which U.S. and coalition forces soundly defeated the Iraqi Army in a traditional war. Reinforcing success, the U.S. military embarked on a decade of improving superior traditional warfighting capability. Concurrently, the United States took on the role of world policeman as the only world superpower in the 1990s. U.S. government and military thinkers acknowledged that the strategic environment changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. How this change impacted the use of military force and the complexity of new threats emerging globally were missed in part to by overall lack of clear strategic thought in the 1990s.

After the success of Desert Shield / Desert Storm and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. military continued to increase its capability to wage traditional warfare. In addition, and in response to the unfamiliar strategic environment, the U.S. embarked on a decade of doctrinal thought and publication that attempted to define and paint a great number of military endeavors and the use of military power as operations other than war. The argument can be made that viewing these operations as something other than war led planners and operators to embark on missions that lacked adequate planning, constrained or limited the means to accomplish missions, and led planners and units to short-change the complexities of these types of missions. After all, it was not combat, so how hard

could it be? Developing doctrine built around existing force structures and capabilities is relatively simple and in reality, results in little if any change. The cost of this approach over time was relearning the lessons of past wars and entering into operations without full understanding or appreciating the complexities and dangers inherent in each and every mission.

With an unclear strategy and belief that military power alone could achieve objectives, the U.S. sent troops to Somalia in December of 1992. Unclear or limited strategic objectives not tied to vital U.S. interests, constantly changing objective for U.S. forces, and an aversion to casualties along with the lack of appreciation for the nature of conflict by civilian and military leaders, led to overall strategic failure in Somalia. Despite deploying appropriate forces and the success of GPFs in adapting to conditions and successfully securing food distribution sites and humanitarian relief efforts, U.S. efforts in Somalia failed as unclear objectives and mission creep allowed special operations units to step up direct action missions designed to capture Somali warlords who interfered with humanitarian relief efforts. Failure to address the underlying causes of conflict, failure to integrate other elements of national power to address issues tied to clearly defined end states, a lack of interagency participation – integration or use of other instruments of power, and the absence of appreciation for the population led to overall failure in Somalia.

Following military action and withdrawal from Somalia, the U.S. intervened in Haiti to overthrow a military dictatorship. Planned conventionally as an invasion, last minute diplomacy resulted in the plan changing in a span of 24 hours from invasion to intervention. Uncertainty and confusion prevailed as three plans for operations in Haiti

were developed and parts of each merged into a final plan for execution. To add to the complexity, last minute diplomacy averted an invasion and turned the Junta leaders and the repressive Haitian military and police forces from enemies into a force that now had to be coordinated with. The U.S. deployed overwhelming force to Haiti. Despite the overwhelming number of troops and military capability, the last minute changes to initial plans caused confusion with U.S. forces and among the Haitian population. The resulting confusion had second and third order effects as rules of engagement (ROE) were initially unclear and U.S. forces failed to intervene in preventing Haitian-on-Haitian violence. In addition to an initial loss of legitimacy with the Haitian people, other factors hindered initial GPF operations in Haiti. The lack of appreciation for Haitian culture and history, a lack of linguists, the inability to conduct assistance and restrictions placed on GPFs from assisting in development or even small projects to improve life and foster cooperation, and over-cautious force protection measures hindered GPF interaction with the Haitian populace. Simply having a military presence in Haiti to keep the peace was not enough to create stability and move the Haitian society towards the envisioned progress.

The 1990s ended with American forces deployed in many countries and the U.S. continuing to use military power to play arbitrator, enforcer, and peace-keeper across the globe.

What Should We Have Learned?

Critics of the use or misuse of U.S. military power in the 1990s recognize that the U.S. national strategy did not account for different approaches to complex problems. Operations in Somalia and Haiti were events in a long series of military operations

undertaken by the U.S. in which the military was used to underpin nation building and some would argue democratization. The military, often the most available and most capable element of national power, was used to address immediate issues without adequate thought going into what comes after forces are deployed. Also missing was the lack of integration, appreciation, or capacity for the role of the other instruments of national power. Get in, get out, and do not get hurt was the charge. From a military standpoint, as highlighted in the review of military doctrine included in the appendix to this work, lost was the appreciation that each situation was unique and called for coordinated and integrated government approaches that involved more than troops or modification to existing tactics, techniques and procedures. Each event that led to the deployment of military force was a complex and dynamic problem that may not have fit into a neat package as prescribed by doctrine. The proliferation of operations, missions, doctrinal terms and labels in the 1990s highlights our military's struggle over how to apply the force at hand to ambiguous, unfamiliar situation. Situations that were not traditional war in the sense of soldier against soldier, tank against tank, ship against ship. To define the military role in these unfamiliar interventions, we often labeled them as something other than war. In doing so, we created within doctrine new concepts and techniques formed around a linear and traditional battle field and force structure. We forgot about our past history in dealing with complex environments in places like the Philippines and Haiti.

Despite our lack of strategic direction, in each operation conducted in the 1990s, GPFs adapted to complex environments. The anticipated increase in complexity of future warfare, not definable on a simplistic scale as traditional or irregular but anticipated as a

combination of the two, will severely stress the limits of GPF flexibility well beyond those faced in Somalia and Haiti.

The way in which GPFs adapted to challenges in Somalia, Haiti, and Iraq, show how GPFs can be used in balance between conventional and irregular warfare. GPFs have a history of figuring out the means necessary to succeed in complex and non-traditional situations despite our tendency to plan and execute conventionally. GPFs adapt to realities in the environment of conflict that drive U.S. forces to adopt irregular approaches. The adaptation to the unexpected environment is often done with some delay as forces adapt and change to the situation. Strategy informed by these painful lessons seems to follow closely behind usually in a number of years. As GPF are employed across the widest possible spectrum of conflict in future environments this adaptation gap will have to be significantly reduced.

In addition, examination of lessons learned from this analysis will shed light on important factors to be considered as we plan for and use GPFs in future conflicts. Anticipating the probability of required capabilities and the complexity of the situation will lead to quicker adaptability and increased versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict if the proper choices are made ahead of time.

Until recently, the IW debate centered on the balance needed between traditional and irregular warfare capability. With the release of the 2010 QDR the debate has been expanded to not only addressing the capability to fight irregular wars, but the need to balance across the entire spectrum of conflict. For this section of doctrinal and historical analysis, and to extract lessons learned pertinent to GPF use across the widest possible

spectrum of conflict, focus of the following discussion will remain on the irregular – traditional debate as the context.

It is also important to point out that the debate over the last few year is not one of irregular versus traditional. The term “versus” on the surface, implies an argument for one or the other force capability. It implies two very different forces, capabilities and doctrines. Given today’s fiscal realities our nation cannot afford GPFs that are singularly focused on one specific mission. This is where balance comes into play. Balance in this case is achieved by having the right “mix” of capabilities and/or dual-use forces and platforms to meet both traditional and irregular threats. In this era of limited and dwindling resources, our nation simply cannot fiscally afford distinct military formation, each narrowly organized and equipped for a niche mission that resides on the widest possible spectrum of conflict. The time has come to approach balance in new light, by using the conventional in unconventional or irregular ways. GPFs are highly adaptable and have proven their versatility. Our general purpose forces are the key but care must be taken as we focus capability and manage risk. Past mistakes cannot be repeated.

The Spectrum of Conflict – Recognizing a Changing Environment

As late as 2001, warfighting thought and doctrine had not progressed to address emerging strategic threats posed by irregular warfare. Throughout the 1990s our nation’s military proved it could adapt tactically but failed to adapt to the changing strategic environment. Changes were made in doctrine but these changes did not address the true complexities of the scale of missions and environments that military forces would face after the end of the Cold War. Operations that were unfamiliar to our existing ways were

in many cases categorized as something other than war. Doctrinal methods were developed that did not truly address complexities. The methods developed simply defined ways to employ or deploy existing Cold War forces, systems, and capabilities into unclearly defined roles. A lack of imagination in developing doctrine and designing operational missions to meet the anticipated threats in the late 1980s and 90s, and the military-centric approach within the doctrine that was developed, led to a generation of leaders and warriors lacking the institutional and intellectual base of knowledge to meet the challenges of irregular warfare both prior to and immediately after the events of 9/11.

Of course there are some, a very small minority of mainly special operations forces who operated in and understood the complexities of irregular environments during the late 80s and throughout the 1990s. But by and large, after Vietnam and prior to operations in OIF / OEF, our focus within the U.S. military was on improving our traditional military capability through the application of technology. Improving conventional forces through transformation focused on technology to increase information awareness, mobility, and lethality. As late as 2001, thought and doctrine had not progressed to deal with the challenges of irregular warfare as highlighted in the events during the initial stages of OEF / OEF. After winning a decisive conventional victory in Iraq in the spring of 2003, many of the units deployed assumed that a quick redeployment home would follow. Few anticipated the events that would unfold next and even fewer anticipated the roles and mission they or their units would be called on to perform over the coming years.

Current Paradigm and Strategic Direction – Operation Iraqi Freedom

Lessons learned during OEF and OIF prove that our military's general purpose forces are highly adaptive and capable of conducting traditional / conventional and irregular warfare. In light of economic challenges that exist in today's world, we simply do not have the luxury of "either or" forces. There are missions and circumstances in which special forces-type distinct capabilities and expertise are required. Some of these capabilities will even need to be expanded. Balance therefore, can be achieved by recognizing and accepting the fact that our general purpose forces are relevant in the future irregular warfare fight and across a large spectrum of missions on the loosely defined spectrum of conflict. They are relevant and critical in developing the capabilities required to operate along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Recognition of the flexibility of general purpose forces will assist our civilian and military leaders in achieving the balanced envisioned by the Secretary of Defense.

Airmen, coastguardsmen, sailors, and artillerymen would have never imagined performing the roles in combat that they have been called upon to do in the past six years. Forward Operating Base protection, combat patrols, sustainment convoy escort, mounted and dismounted combat patrols escorting Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, key-leader engagements are just a few of the "irregular" roles our service men and women have been called upon to perform.⁷³ Still, the debate continues about exactly what irregular warfare entails and if we as a military need to separate the conventional from the irregular.

⁷³ Irregular used in the context of the non-traditional roles military forces have been called upon to perform during OIF / OEF.

In March of 2003, virtually no one would have imagined that the U.S military and its coalition partners would still be embattled in Iraq or Afghanistan in 2010. Progress is being achieved in Iraq at a painful price in blood and resources. The gradual drawdown of U.S. forces and transition of security to the Iraqi government is well underway. Afghanistan is a different story. As of March of 2010, the United States and NATO are in the beginning of another military build-up and major operations in Afghanistan. Public patience has worn thin after conducting nearly eight years of simultaneous combat, stability, and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan only to return in 2010 to “re-win” the war, this time focused on the initial building block of winning a counterinsurgency, the support of the population. How could this happen? We won didn’t we? We defeated the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. On the evening of May 2, 2003, President Bush declared victory in Iraq while addressing sailors aboard the U.S.S Abraham Lincoln.⁷⁴ *“In the Battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.”*⁷⁵

Conventional Warfare and Mission Accomplished- Right?

The challenges in Afghanistan are many and complex. Arguments can be made that after initial success in defeating the Taliban, attention and resources were diverted from Afghanistan and focused on addressing the mounting issues in Iraq. Lack of initial planning for post conflict resolution, lost opportunities to secure the population and to retain some semblance of a functioning Iraqi government, and the lack of a coherent

⁷⁴ David Sanger, "After Effects: The President; Bush Declares 'One Victory in a War on Terror'." *New York Times*, May 2, 2003, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/02/world/aftereffects-the-president-bush-declares-one-victory-in-a-war-on-terror.html>, (accessed October 2, 2009).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

strategy all combined to fuel an insurgency that needed to be addressed. Unfortunately it took over two years to recognize and address the Iraqi insurgency as conventional force and thought (though called counterinsurgent by 2005) was applied by the military in one line of operation while the Department of State and Inter-Agency under Ambassador Khalilzad sought to deal with building an Iraqi government along a separate line of operation.⁷⁶

Clearly something was out of balance. Whether true or not, the perception existed, “No one in Iraq is personally responsible for victory...Khalilzad handles the diplomatic political maneuverings to do with the Iraqi government formations only, Casey does military counterinsurgency (COIN) and security only. No one is in overall command of both aspects.”⁷⁷ This dynamic occurring at the operational level was also occurring at the tactical level between 2003 and 2006.

Intellectually Armed – Making Progress through a New Approach

In a Pentagon press briefing conducted over a video teleconference on September 13, 2005, Colonel H.R. McMaster briefed members of the press on the on-going operations being conducted by McMaster’s 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Tal Afar, Iraq. As Colonel McMaster briefed and answered questions, he talked of a COIN approach in terms of securing the population. He also talked using terms like “clear, hold, and build” and of “partnering” with the 3d Iraqi Army and local Iraqi Government

⁷⁶ Zalmay Khalilzad served as the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from June 2005 to March 2007. Throughout his tenure, Ambassador Khalilzad often warned of the dangers of insurgency and sectarian violence in Iraq. Source: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zalmay_Khalilzad (accessed September 26, 2009).

⁷⁷ David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. (New York: Oxford University Press, U.S.A, 2009), 134.

Officials.⁷⁸ Focusing on population security and basing forces among Iraqis was not the norm during this time. In the fall of 2005 most U.S. and coalition forces resided in large Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), secure and safe from the dangerous Iraqi insurgents. Operating from FOBs also had the effect of isolating coalition forces from the Iraqi population. When venturing out into the population, operations were driven by rare actionable intelligence and for the most part, targeted individual insurgents and suspected terrorists. The population was a point of friction on the battlefield, not a point of focus. In Tal Afar, the paradigm was turned upside down resulting in real progress. Progress brought on by a different approach driven by an informed leader and executed by GPFs. Grasping for any measure of success, political leaders in Washington took note.

Recognizing Success and a Change in Strategy

On October 19, 2005, in her opening remarks before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated, “Our political-military strategy has to be clear, hold, and build: to clear areas from insurgent control, to hold them securely, and to build durable, national Iraqi institutions.”⁷⁹ This was followed in November of 2005 with the Bush Administration’s *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*.⁸⁰ *The National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* was consistent with earlier strategy and built on the three lines of security, economy and governance. What this new strategy did was to apply the concept of clear, hold, and built directly to the security line of operation.

⁷⁸ Department of Defense Press Briefing, Colonel H.R. McMaster, September 13, 2005, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2106>, accessed September 26, 2009.

⁷⁹ Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Opening Remarks before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 19, 2005, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/55303.htm>.

⁸⁰ See *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, November 30, 2005, p. 2, available at White House website, http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq/iraq_national_strategy_20051130.pdf.

Clear and hold using U.S., coalition and Iraqi forces, while building Iraqi Forces capacity and capability were now keys to providing security for the population. If this could be achieved, building could occur along the political and economic lines as well.

The change in approach and resulting success of general purpose forces in Tal Afar had a significant impact on the overall strategy pursued in Iraq. The shift, albeit so slight, from conventional to COIN would have a major impact on the future success or failure in Iraq. It would still take more than a year to rediscover the Small Wars Manual, gather the experts at Fort Leavenworth, and find the missing ingredients to progress in Iraq.⁸¹

Recognition with Reluctance to Go All In – Iraq 2005 to 2006

Prior to the initial success in Tal Afar, attempts were made to address certain aspects of taking a COIN approach to operations in Iraq. At the beginning of 2005, Multi-National Corps-Iraq initiated operations within its subordinate divisions to address the need for an increased use of Iraqi Security Forces, primarily Iraqi Army and Special Police or Commando Units. The intent was to increase the use of Iraqi Forces in conjunction with U.S. and coalition forces. U.S. and coalition forces remained focused on trying to establish security mainly through aggressive individual targeting of key insurgents, raids based on actionable intelligence, and combat patrols. Iraqi forces were employed to put an Iraqi face on certain operations. Focus of overall operations continued to key on identifiable insurgent groups and high-value targets (former regime leaders, foreign fighters, and improved explosive device bomb makers and facilities).

⁸¹ Department of the Navy, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps. *Small Wars Manual*, FMFRP 12-15. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1940).

Directed partnering of specific U.S. and coalition units with Iraq Security Forces was conceived and launched during the fall of 2004 and beginning of 2005, just as many Iraqi Army and Security Forces were being formed. Concurrently, commanders were tasked to continue on-going combat operations and initiate partnering without asking for additional resources.⁸² Progress would be made, it was thought, by forcing an Iraqi solution to an Iraqi problem. Involving Iraqi Security Forces along with a Coalition preoccupation of restoring essential services to Iraqis was what was viewed as the key to success. Missing was an appreciation for the importance of securing and gaining the support of the population over defeating insurgents.

Operation Together Forward focused primarily on the security line of operation though it did include some aspects of political and economic effort. Operation Together Forward in concept used primarily Iraqi Security Forces to clear areas of insurgent activity in attempts to reduce intimidation and safe havens for insurgents in large populated and outlying areas. In addition to partnering, steps were taken to “inform” incoming military personnel and units on COIN doctrine and practices through short courses at Taji, Iraq and in Kuwait.⁸³ This training was primarily focused on unit senior leadership and came at the end of a conventional oriented train-up for deployment that still focused heavily on traditional warfare and kinetic operations.

The shift or balancing of policy, strategy and operational plans, and tactical methods to address the situation in Iraq arguably took a period of about three years

⁸² Insights from personal experience as XVIII Airborne Corps LNO to Multi-National Corps Iraq from September 2004 to February 2005. Guidance was issued by Commander MNC-I to subordinate commanders during Dec 2004 MNC-I Commander’s Conference.

⁸³ Counterinsurgency or COIN Academies were opened in Kuwait and at Taji, Iraq. Military instructors and contractors provided one and two week courses on basic COIN doctrine and best practices.

between 2004 and 2006. Change occurred slowly and gained momentum as the real threat of failure in Iraq loomed in summer of 2006. Through a recognized urgency and acting on the seeds of success in Tal Afar, the New Way Forward Strategy continued to evolve and eventually led to the mid-2007 surge of forces into Iraq. A surge led by general purpose forces employed to conduct a counterinsurgency fight. The surge forces were similar in structure and equipment to the other GPF units deployed in Iraq since 2003. The difference in 2007 was a strategy focused on security of the Iraqi population. Execution of this strategy required a different mindset and different approaches by GPFs. One common approach or doctrine did not fit the entire country and through experience and multiple deployments, leaders now recognized that each area of Iraq possessed a unique set of challenges. Each environment demanded a tailored approach based on the unique factors affecting their specific area of operations. Armed with this realization, the new COIN approach, and better equipped with critical enablers, the surge began in early 2007. By working in new ways, units adapted to the environment. Balance achieved in some ways yes, but no “high fives” on the objective just yet.

Trying Something “New” – The Counterinsurgency Approach and the Surge

The 2007 surge was predicated on the COIN principle of population security in which the requisite number of forces is not defined in relation to the enemy, but is determined by the ratio of friendly security forces to the population. In the New Way Strategy, COIN principles would be applied properly in surging forces and operating in conjunction with improving Iraqi Security Forces to *secure the population* in order to clear and hold while building occurred within the security, political and economic lines of

operations.⁸⁴ The majority of the forces deployed in the surge were general purpose forces consisting of five Army brigade combat teams, one Army combat aviation brigade, one Marine expeditionary unit, two Marine infantry battalions, one division headquarters, and additional support units. Ready or not, welcome to the counterinsurgency fight.

Rediscovery of Counterinsurgency Doctrine

The foreword to the University of Chicago Press edition of the 2007 Army / Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency Manual, author John A. Nagl states, “Although there were lonely voices arguing that the Army needed to focus on counterinsurgency in the wake of the Cold War ... the sad fact is that when an insurgency began in Iraq in the late summer of 2003, the Army was unprepared to fight it.”⁸⁵ Nagl goes on to state the Army found itself unprepared in 2003 because of an unwillingness to internalize and build upon the lessons of Vietnam. The conscious decisions of the late 1970s, 1980s and 90s weighted the balance of U.S. GPF capability firmly on the ability to execute traditional warfare. Missing the strategic opportunities to realize the needed shift or balancing to include non-traditional capabilities, the U.S. found its self facing the requirement for change in the worst possible of situations, after military forces were committed to combat.

Engaged in a counterinsurgency and lacking a counterinsurgency doctrine in 2003, the U.S. Army set about producing an interim counterinsurgency manual. Field

⁸⁴ Lines of Operations commonly referred to as LOOs. Defined in JP 1-0 as a logical line that connects actions or nodes and /or decisive points related in time and purpose with an objective(s).

⁸⁵ *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007), xiii.

Manual 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency*, was released on October 1, 2004.⁸⁶ As was often done in the 1990s, once again the method used to address a problem presented by an unanticipated complex environment was development of a quick fix doctrine built around existing force structure. The results of efforts in 2004 was a doctrine unread, a doctrine containing concepts foreign to non-educated leadership, and a doctrine whose methods were not institutionalized and whose enabling capabilities were not adequately resident within the military.

Serious work on development of a useful counterinsurgency doctrine began in October of 2005 when Lieutenant General David Petraeus was assigned as Commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Educated in history, international relations, skilled in counterinsurgency, and possessing extensive first-hand experience in Iraq, Petraeus set about solidifying counterinsurgency doctrine and addressing the education gap that existed within the professional ranks of the military. Petraeus and a small team of trusted chapter leads set about capturing an updated and functional counterinsurgency doctrine that could be immediately applied in ongoing operations and would prove useful in future conflicts. With inputs from a wide range of military, government, academic, and non-governmental experts, the 2007 edition of the U.S. Army – U.S. Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual was released on December 15, 2006. Concurrently, this manual became the playbook for the surge strategy in Iraq led by the new Multi-National Force Iraq Commander, General David Petraeus.

⁸⁶ Ibid, xv.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 provided historical examples to explain how we as a military arrived at the current crossroads in the IW versus traditional debate. As we drawdown operations in Iraq and over the next few years anticipate the eventual drawdown of operations in Afghanistan, our nation and military will remain at a crossroads as we attempt to balance defense capability to meet the challenges presented across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. We have seen how hard anticipation of future environments and predicting future threats can be. We have also witnessed how failure to think about or consider change can lead to painful lessons learned as GPFs struggle to understand and adapt to unanticipated environments once bayonets are fixed and thrust into battle.

Anticipating complex environments, understanding the dynamics and factors that impact each environment, thinking in non-traditional ways, having an appreciation for history and past lessons learned, focusing on broadening leader education and internalization of warfare across the broadest possible spectrum, and instituting required change are critical to achieving the proper GPF balance in capability. As we strive to design and resource general purpose forces that are versatile, caution must be taken not to repeat the same mistakes made in the 1990s. Even if all of the above can be accomplished, two of the largest hurdles that have to be mitigated in achieving the desired balance will be resources and risk. Operational, force management, institutional and future challenge risk were addressed in the 2010 QDR but risk assessment and mitigation at this point, and the risk factors being considered, fall far short of the looming realities that DoD may soon face.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings and Recommendations with Regard to Achieving Balance and Increasing GPF Capability across the Widest Possible Spectrum of Conflict⁸⁷

There are numerous lessons to be learned from GPF operations in the 1990s and from GPF experience in recent combat operations in Iraq. These lessons should be considered when planning future deployments into complex situations and should also be taken into account as Services focus on increasing IW capability; and capabilities to meet complex environments across the full spectrum of conflict.

When placed in a situation requiring change, GPFs are slow to adapt. Although GPFs possess a certain level of adaptability based on the situation and circumstances, GPFs historically lag in adapting to new and complex environments. This may be due to the tendency in military culture and institutions to be resistant to change. Another explanation that could account for this dynamic is that historically, military units tend to man, equip, organize, and train for the last war. As noted in the preceding chapter, understanding of complex environments, educated leadership, and critical enablers can have an impact in closing the adaptability gap for GPF units.

General purpose forces are highly adaptable to complex situation given the right leadership and focus. Understanding the complex situation and environment GPFs operate in is critical. Case studies show that GPF historically enter into complex environments having trained, planned, equipped, and deployed in a traditional mindset. After initial operations, units over time adapt to the realities and environment they face.

⁸⁷ This includes achieving balance between traditional and irregular warfare.

Adaptation is usually driven by leadership armed with the intellect to assess the complexity of the situation. Education and leadership matter. Educated leaders capable of dealing with complex problems and able to develop and implement innovative approaches can significantly reduce the time it takes GPFs to adapt to a complex environment they may not have been initially prepared to operate in. Inherent in this capability is knowing when and how to take acceptable risk. We must reinforce the combat experience of our emerging leaders who have multiple tours operating in complex environments. Broadening leader education in areas beyond conventional warfare and grounding them in history, global issues, unconventional and irregular warfare, space and cyber-space, joint operations, and innovative approaches to complex environments and how to operate in them, will foster future leaders who are comfortable operating in and leading joint forces in complex environments.

Understanding complex environments from the tactical to the strategic level are critical in understanding required GPF capabilities and enables; and how to properly employ them. This is also critical in understanding the proper use and limits of military power. Progress has been made in recent years in recognizing and defining complex environments. Strategic and operational planners are currently developing and debating frameworks to assess both strategic and operational environments. The use of approaches such as campaign design, are processes to help frame problems and assist planners in better understanding underlying issues, the correct problems to be addressed, and better understanding of the dynamics of the complex environment we operate in.

Planning must be conducted to address operations beyond achieving initial military end states with an appreciation for non-military enablers and their capability and

capacity limitations. Too often in recent history military planners focused exclusively on the anticipated fight, what is currently referred to as Phase III operations.⁸⁸ Military planners in past conflicts displayed a tendency to leave the follow-on situation to civilian masters or, as in the case of Somalia and Haiti, the United Nations. In reality, the necessity for capability and capacity in post-combat environments often results in military means being applied to the problem. Until other U.S. Government departments and agencies increase capacity and policy dictates otherwise, this trend is likely to continue. Military leaders must be adaptive and forward looking to understand and anticipate the requirements of each mission as well as the second and third order effects of operational and tactical decisions and how this impacts non-military specific efforts. Understanding of the entire environment to include military and non-military events is essential to anticipation of changes to ongoing operations for general purpose forces.⁸⁹

Integration of general purpose forces, special operations forces, interagency and others organizational entities operating within the complex environment must be planned in detail prior to execution. Special emphasis should be placed on improving the interagency piece in a supporting or supported relationship keeping focus on understanding of IA capacities. General purpose force and special operations force integration remains one of the success stories of recent operations in OIF/OEF.

Appropriate force is not just numbers. Appropriate force involves action and the ability to adapt to complex situations. Initial operations in Haiti highlight the challenges

⁸⁸ The Phasing Model as outlined in Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning, 26 December 2006, lists: Phase 0-Shape, Phase I-Deter, Phase II-Seize the Initiative, Phase III-Dominate, Phase IV-Stabilize, Phase V-Enable Civil Authority, Phase IV-Return to Phase 0 Shaping, p IV-34.

⁸⁹ This does not imply accepting mission creep. The point is that operations now and in the future will rarely encompass a strictly military deployment, mission accomplishment and a rapid redeployment.

military commanders and units face in complex environments. Conditions and dynamics often change at the last minute during planning, and during implementation and execution. Changes as seen in the Haiti example can have significant impact and change the very nature of the operation at any or all levels. Failure to recognize or react to change in the environment increases the time it takes GPFs to adapt. When overwhelming force is applied, enemy or opposing entities lacking the capability to directly challenge this force will choose to not engage or find indirect ways to attack or pursue their objectives. It is an adversary's non-action that lulls us into an incorrect sense of effectiveness or his action through indirect approaches that cause us to react and adapt.

In addition to technology; cultural understanding, language skills, and possessing the will and ability to communicate with those inside the complex environment are critical enablers. Adaptation of GPFs hinges on the level of understanding of the dynamics that influence the environment. A lack of cultural understanding, language skill, ability or willingness to communicate with all entities (Allied, Coalition, IA/NGO/PVO, indigenous population, insurgents or enemy) operating in the environment will lead to a failure to understand the ways a force needs to adapt to meet existing challenges. As seen in Somalia, Haiti, and Iraq, not considering or having an appreciation for the population or enemy perspective can lead to missing key information that helps inform the dynamics of an environment. It can also lead to legitimacy issues and alienation from the population that the military force is intending to protect or influence.

General purpose forces rely on critical enablers to increase versatility and close the gap on adaptability. The adaptability gap being defined as the time it takes to enable

a critical capability required to execute an essential task in a complex environment. In addition to the physical enablers, enablers entail using existing capabilities in new ways or developing new capabilities to meet immediate unanticipated or future anticipated requirements. Identifying the proper risks and mitigating those risks are critical to achieving the right capabilities. As shown, we do not always get this right. This is why reforming decision making and acquisition processes is so important. The environment of today demands GPFs are enabled in terms of days, weeks, and months as opposed to years.

To properly focus our defense strategy, we must define the widest possible spectrum of conflict. With the release of the 2010 QDR the widest possible spectrum of conflict has become the benchmark on which defense capabilities will now be focused. With this call for rebalancing U.S. military capabilities it will be critical to define exactly what is meant by the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Although the 2010 QDR does not define the spectrum in detail, the assumption can be made that the widest possible spectrum encompasses the range of strategic end states identified in the 2008 National Defense Strategy and within the Core Mission Area (CMAs) identified in the 2009 DoD Framework for the Quadrennial Roles and Missions. The debate concerning the widest possible spectrum of conflict has the potential to be as contentious as the debate has been in regards to irregular warfare over the past four years. Regardless of where the debate goes and where along the spectrum of conflict GPF capabilities are developed and employed, we must never lose focus that war should be planned and executed with all available instruments of power and what may appear like an operation “other than war,” can quickly become deadly.

Doctrine falls short of addressing the complexity of contemporary environments. Recent doctrine developed after the end of the Cold War has often proven to be inadequate or over-simplifies the unknown. The over proliferation of doctrine in the 1990s did not account for the complexity of the possible environments GPFs could be called on to deploy to. Doctrine from this era over-simplified the complex and did not consider new and innovative ways of approaching and dealing with problems. Doctrinal approaches often used existing GPF formations and military force structures only and lacked creativity. They failed to consider a full interagency, coalition, or partnered approach to solving complex problems. Finally, many of the doctrinal approaches to deal with emerging issue in the post-Cold War era painted operations as something other than war. This clear distinction between combat and non-combat in doctrine may have contributed to the issues encountered by leaders who failed to recognize an insurgency in Iraq between 2003 and late 2005. Closely tied to the need to reform joint professional military education, focus in the future should concentrate less on doctrine and more on education that teaches how to think not what to think. As witnessed in Iraq and Afghanistan, operations and approaches to accomplishing missions in complex situations have progressed well beyond what doctrine can keep up with.

The concept of balance has shifted beyond the initial focus of irregular warfare. After the release of the 2006 QDR our military embarked on a road that could have potentially led U.S. to another period of imbalance. The strong signaling and intense focus on IW had the potential to fundamentally shift our warfighting capability too far in favor of IW approaches. Only after careful review, study, and in-depth thinking on the capabilities needed to address future threats, DoD appears to have backed off the IW

focus and opted to address capabilities along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Shifting the aspect of balance from IW – traditional to the widest possible spectrum of conflict signals a realization that our nation must not only have the capability to engage to prevent, we also have to maintain the capability and capacity to deter through a position of power. The risk now is that we have shifted to focusing on too wide a spectrum of capabilities.

Attempting to achieve maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict has risk when the spectrum and desired capabilities requirements have yet to be defined. In addition, the current defense strategy appears to be weighed heavily on fixing current enablers and closing capability gaps that exist in the current fight. The latest defense strategy, as signaled by the 2010 QDR, proposes a new force sizing construct but does not post any significant changes to force structure that may be needed to meet future challenges. In budget execution, it appears that enablers are being addressed but resources are still being allocated into legacy systems. This has resulted in a strategy – program mismatch. At some point resources will have to be matched against the future capabilities required to meet needs identified by the DoD Core Mission Areas. The DoD Core Mission Areas inform the Services as to the possible range of capabilities that GPFs must possess.

In addition to operational, force management, institutional and future challenge risk, there are a number of factors in play that must be continually assessed in terms of risk. In order to prepare for a much broader range of security challenges, DoD must realistically identify the cost and associated risks in maintaining general purpose forces required to achieve maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

With looming budget constraints, we will not be fully capable of resourcing against every possible contingency. Yet, in failing to identify priorities in the latest defense strategy, DoD leadership has put us in the position of attempting to prepare for everything.

The U.S. must think and act strategically. Setting lofty goals is not strategic thinking. As Andrew Krepinevich and Barry White point out in their report, *Regaining Strategic Competence*, “both public strategy documents from recent administrations and actual American strategic behavior suggest that U.S. political and military leaders have been increasingly inclined to equate strategy with listing desirable goals, as opposed to figuring out how to achieve them.”⁹⁰

GPFs will remain our primary means to achieve military strategic, operational, and tactical objectives. In devising strategies to link the ends and means, all of the identified factors above impact GPF adaptability and play into enabling GPF versatility. If irregular warfare capability is anticipated to be a requirement in the future, GPFs and the planners who employ them must account for these considerations and continually assess future requirements.

GPFs will be critical in achieving the balance to execute operations across all mission areas and provide Combatant Commanders with the capability and skills required for success. There are risks in focusing everywhere. To achieve the DoD goal of possessing a broad portfolio of military capabilities with maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict, risk must be identified and mitigated with a close

⁹⁰ Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry D. Watts, “*Regaining Strategic Competence*,” Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, (Washington D.C.: March 20, 2009).

eye monitoring changes in the strategic environment that could signal a shift in the capabilities required.

Conclusion

This paper examined general purpose force capability and versatility in past operations and in light of anticipated future challenges and the call of achieving balance along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Research found that to adequately identify and assess risk, the widest possible spectrum of conflict must be defined as a starting point. Once defined, hard decisions in terms of balancing resources and risk have to be made; these decisions based on the best prediction of future threats, military capability that is defined and focused on supporting clear U.S. vital national interests, and executable and sustainable with the anticipated resources available. Doing this will decrease risk to our military's GPF by providing them with the focus and resources to close capability gaps thus posturing them to be better prepared for future conflict.

Research also found that U.S. general purpose forces may not always be prepared for the fight they find themselves in. Despite this, when faced with the requirement to adapt, GPFs do so. Adaptation usually takes time and is influenced by a number of factors. Ability to adapt to a situation or requirement is influenced by focusing on the right capabilities, through possessing or having the flexibility to provide required enablers, through educated and informed leadership, by understanding in detail complex environments, and through considering alternative ways of using GPFs in conjunction with other elements of national power.

Lastly, the challenge of moving the U.S. military to achieve any specified joint capability is difficult. Long and complicated processes, Services that act in accordance with competing priorities, and the consensus needed among the various stakeholders make change extremely difficult. At some point, informing may have to evolve into directing at the strategic level within DoD.

With the release of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review and the submission of the FY 2011 Defense Budget, the Obama Administration and the Department of Defense initiated a strategy that focuses the Nation's defense on maintaining a broad portfolio of military capability with maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. This strategy is not without danger given its near-term focus and DoD attempting to rebalance efforts with a current host of factors impinging on the strategic, political, and military risk. Fiscal realities are bearing down to put strategic flexibility potentially out of reach after 2014. The current defense strategy amounts to providing immediate enablers for the near-term while hedging for the mid to long-term. General purpose forces possess the capability to meet current requirements and will continue to be adaptable and versatile enough to achieve a degree of balance along the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Given the case studies that show adaption and versatility are a function of understanding, leadership and enablers, we can only hope that the investments we make today will enable our formations and joint leaders with the right tools to operate in the future environments we envision. We owe them nothing less than our best.

*Resources are always limited in comparison with our wants, always
constraining out action.⁹¹*

⁹¹ Charles J. Hitch and Roland N. McKean, *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 23.

APPENDIX

DOCTRINE AND APPROACHES TO WARFARE

Mentally Distancing Operations from Warfare; Cold-War and Post Cold War

Doctrinal Analysis

Introduction

If the threat we face is not war but is “like” war, what is it? Small Wars, Counter Guerrilla Operations, Operations Other Than War (OOTW), Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), Support and Stability Operations (SASO), Transition Operations (TO), Nation Building, Counterinsurgency (COIN), Irregular Warfare (IW), and Hybrid War are just a few. Each of these terms was created in our military lexicon over the past two decades as attempts to define specific roles or operations addressing real or anticipated situations. The majority of these terms are attempts in the past twenty plus years to define operations in doctrine that in most cases were viewed as something *other than war*. In many cases, the argument can be made that viewing these operations as something other than war led planners and operators to embark on missions that lacked adequate planning, constrained or limited the means to accomplish missions, and led planners and units to short-change the complexities of these types of missions. After all, it was not combat, so how hard could it be? The cost was relearning the lessons of past small wars and realizing over time, the complexities of the post Cold-War global environment. Change means more than creating a doctrinal construct tailored to existing capability.

Doctrine, Words, and the Warfighting Mindset

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet conventional threat, the U.S. struggled to anticipate and failed to identify the threats facing our nation. Additionally, the military did not do an adequate job of assessing the strategic environment and addressing how to plan and fight conflicts other than large-scale traditional war. Doctrine writers separated the concepts of general war from what was defined as operations using military force that were “less than war.” These “other than war” operations often stressed and were classified in doctrine as non-combat. Also, these operations were almost exclusively viewed as purely military operations. Other elements of national power were simply not addressed. Examining recent Service doctrines and in particular, the joint concept of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) as published in 1995, provide examples of how we attempted to fit existing capabilities into complex operations we did not fully understand.

Army Doctrine

Looking at Army specific doctrine, FM 100-5, *Operations*, dated August 20, 1982 addresses traditional warfare as developed under AirLand Battle Doctrine.⁹² Chapter 16, Contingency Operations, is the only section of this doctrinal manual that attempts to address any type of operations other than traditional AirLand Battle. Chapter 16

⁹² FM 100-5, *Operations*, Headquarters Department of the Army, (Washington, DC, 20 August 1982). AirLand Battle Doctrine was developed to address the significant Soviet-Warsaw Pact armored threat in Europe. This doctrine called for large traditional combat formations and systems.

addresses contingency operations but does so in a traditional force sense. This chapter simply discusses using traditional forces in what is today called crisis action planning.⁹³

The 1987 edition of FM 90-8, *Counter Guerrilla Operations*, addresses guerrillas as operating in three phases: The Latent-Incipient Phase, the Guerrilla Warfare Phase, and the War of Movement Phase. Operations are discussed as military specific at the conventional brigade and below level with operations framed in terms of AirLand Battle.⁹⁴ FM 90-8 places counter guerrilla operations and counterinsurgency operations under the main heading of Foreign Internal Defense (FID). The distinction is made between counter guerrilla and counterinsurgency in that counter guerrilla efforts focus on attacking guerrilla forces only. Counterinsurgency includes defeating counter guerrilla or insurgent forces in conjunction with an Internal Defense and Development Plan (IDAD) developed by the host country.⁹⁵

U.S. Army Field Manual FM 7-98, *Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC)* dated October 19, 1992, makes small steps forward of thinking in terms other than traditional war. Low-Intensity Conflict is defined as:

a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups. It is below general war and above routine peaceful competition. It often involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. LIC ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. According to this doctrine, LICs are often localized,

⁹³ Ibid, 16-1.

⁹⁴ FM 90-8, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, Headquarters, Department of the Army, (Washington, D.C., 29 August 1986), 1-7.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 1-5.

usually in third world countries, but they contain regional and global security implications.⁹⁶

In FM 7-98, LIC is divided into four operational categories. Types of LIC operations are listed as: support for insurgency and counterinsurgency, combating terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and peacetime contingency operations. Operations are discussed as they relate to the traditional brigade and battalion task force augmented by special operations forces. This doctrinal manual is different from past doctrinal manuals in that it makes the distinction that “the possibility of U.S. troops becoming involved in a low-intensity conflict (LIC) is ever increasing.”⁹⁷

Army doctrinal publications influenced thought and practice throughout the 1990’s and into the 21st Century. None of these concepts were radically changed or updated as a result of lessons learned in Somalia, Haiti, or the Balkans in the 1990’s.

United States Marine Corps Doctrine

In Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-1, *Strategy*, published November, 12, 1997, on pages fourteen and fifteen are written these words:

One frequent error is to describe war as something that takes place exclusively between nations and states.....Another mistake is to limit our definition of war to sustained, large-scale military operations. Here the defining condition is one of scale and duration. Under heading such as “Military Operations Other than War,” this approach lumps many forms of political conflict that clearly satisfy Clausewitz’s definition of war with other events-such as humanitarian assistance-that do not.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ FM 7-98, *Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict*, Headquarters Department of the Army, (Washington, D.C., 19 October 1992), 1-1.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 1-1

⁹⁸ Marine Corps Doctrine Publication 1-1, *Strategy*, Department of the Navy, Headquarters United States Marine Corps, (Washington, D.C., 12 November 1997), 14-15.

The Marine Corps, perhaps because of its history in small wars, maintains a mindset that war at any point on the spectrum of conflict is just that – war. Even so, somewhere along the line we seem to have forgotten this important lesson.

United States Navy Doctrine

Other than the U.S. Navy's history of riverine operations during the Vietnam War and the existence of Naval Special Warfare Units (Navy Seals), the Navy does not possess an unconventional warfare doctrine. Since 2005, the Navy has implemented a number of initiatives to address increasing IW capabilities. Establishing a Navy IW Office, establishing a global maritime partnership program, increasing riverine forces, the establishment of Global Fleet Stations, and establishing the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC). The NECC is a global force provided of expeditionary capabilities that provides capabilities to joint force commanders by resourcing, manning, and equipping scalable expeditionary force packages of active and reserve sailors.⁹⁹

United States Air Force Doctrine

Prior to 2007, the U.S. Air Force did not possess a doctrine that addressed irregular warfare or COIN. In conducting this research, study after study brought to light the lack of a doctrine that addressed current challenges as they relate to IW. In a brief paper written by Major Kenneth Beebe, entitled "The Air Force's Missing Doctrine," Major Beebe succinctly traces the lack of Air Force attention to any type of small war,

⁹⁹ Ronald O'Rourke, "Navy Role in Irregular Warfare and Counterterrorism: Background and Issues for Congress." Congressional Research Service, (Washington, D.C.: July 20, 2009), 5.

COIN, or IW operations.¹⁰⁰ Despite a long history of involvement in IW type operations, it was not until late 2007 that the Air Force developed a doctrine to address IW.

Based on the emphasis placed on IW as a result of the 2006 QDR and in reaction to being left out of the development of the *Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, the Air Force immediately addressed IW by publishing Air Force Doctrine Document 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*. Published August 1, 2007, this manual captured many of the lessons rediscovered as top military and civilian experts were finishing up publication of the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual.

Joint Doctrine in the 1990s

Reviewing Joint Publication 3-07 (JP 3-07), *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)*, dated June 16, 1995, nowhere in this publication is there a clear and concise definition of MOOTW. JP 3-07 states, “to understand MOOTW, it is useful to understand how they differ from operations in war. Although MOOTW and war may often seem similar, MOOTW focuses on deterring war and promoting peace while war encompasses large-scale, sustained combat operations to achieve national objectives to protect national interests.”¹⁰¹ In this definition is a concept that permeates both joint and service doctrine published in the 1990s and early 2000s, the concept that war somehow only encompasses large scale traditional combat operations. Most publications that mention MOOTW do acknowledge that MOOTW *may* involve

¹⁰⁰ Kenneth Beebe, “*The Air Force’s Missing Doctrine – How the Air Force Ignores Counterinsurgency.*” *Air & Space Power Journal*, (Spring 2006), 27-34.

¹⁰¹ Joint Publication 3-07., *Military Operations Other than War*, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, (Washington, D.C., 16 June 1995), vii.

combat; but the noncombat focus of MOOTW is consistently stressed throughout this and other doctrinal publications in the 1990s.

Another observation is that doctrine addressing operations other than traditional war were often ambiguously defined and tended to be lumped into the MOOTW category. MOOTW became the “all other” operations that did not fit into the traditional offensive, defensive, deep attack and rear area operations by conventional forces.

- MOOTW OPERATIONS**

 - 1) **Arms Control**
 - 2) ***Combating Terrorism***
 - 3) **DOD Support to Counterdrug Operations**
 - 4) **Enforcement of Sanctions/Maritime Intercept Operations**
 - 5) **Enforcing Exclusion Zones**
 - 6) **Ensuring Freedom of Navigation and Overflight**
 - 7) **Humanitarian Assistance**
 - 8) **Military Support to Civil Authorities**
 - 9) ***Nation Assistance / Support to Counterinsurgency***
 - 10) **Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)**
 - 11) **Peace Operations (PO)**
 - 12) **Protection of Shipping**
 - 13) **Recovery Operations**
 - 14) **Show of Force Operations**
 - 15) **Strikes and Raids**

Figure 3. *Types of MOOTW Operations as listed in Joint Pub 3-07, dated June, 16, 1995¹⁰²*
(Italics added by author)

It is interesting to note that in the 1995 version of Joint Pub 3-07 that combating terrorism and nation assistance and support to counterinsurgency are listed as Military Operations *Other Than War*. Even more enlightening when you consider the reason the United States and Coalition went to war in 2003 was to combat terrorism and that one of the primary reasons cited for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq encompassed nation assistance and support to counterinsurgency.

¹⁰² Ibid, III-1. Italics added by author to highlight operations.

To further show how our mindset during the 1990s did not adequately address irregular threats, as highlighted on page III-15 of Joint Pub 3-07, “the U.S. Government may support insurgency against a regime threatening U.S. interests. U.S. forces may provide logistics and training, but *normally do not themselves conduct combat operations.*”¹⁰³ Conflict and operation over the past two decades have been anything but normal.

The Spectrum of Conflict – Recognizing a Changing Environment

As late as 2001, thought and doctrine had not progressed to address emerging strategic threats posed by irregular warfare. Military operations in the Army’s FM 3-0, *Operations*, still listed military operations along a spectrum of conflict that spanned operation from war to those seen as other than war. Operations were defined as offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations to encompass “full spectrum of operations across the full spectrum of conflict.”¹⁰⁴ This publication, at least in Army doctrine, for the first time mentioned conducting operations in joint, multinational and interagency environments.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Each doctrinal term, since the end of the Cold War, made its way from academic circles / warfighting concepts, or battlefield necessity, into the accepted or unaccepted definitions in various military policy, guidance and doctrinal manuals. Often, these terms

¹⁰³ Ibid, III-15. Italics added by author.

¹⁰⁴ Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*. Headquarters, Department of the Army, (Washington, D.C., 14 June 2001), 1-14-1-15.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 1-14-1-16.

evolved into corresponding movements assigned to a specific service or organization with responsibility to develop doctrine, operations, training, material, leadership, personnel, and facilities required to prepare for and execute the task.¹⁰⁶ Often lacking within DoD was an overarching framework to guide joint doctrine and concept development. During the past two decades, this phenomenon has wreaked havoc in our academic and training institutions and at the lower levels of our formations as units deployed into complex environments trained, equipped, and planning to win against a conventional adversary.

The intent of this review of doctrine and the way in which the military thought about operations is admittedly Army centric. The intent is to show how our nation's military failed to adapt to the changing strategic environment. Changes were made in doctrine but the changes did not address the true complexities of the scale of missions and environments that military forces would face after the end of the Cold War. Operations that were unfamiliar to our existing ways were in many cases categorized as something other than war. Doctrinal methods were developed that did not truly address complexities. The methods developed simply defined ways to employ or deploy existing Cold War forces and systems into unclearly defined roles. A lack of imagination in developing doctrine and designing operational missions to meet the anticipated threats in the late 1980s and 90s, and the military-centric approach within the doctrine that was developed, led to a generation of leaders and warriors lacking the institutional and intellectual base of knowledge to meet the challenges of irregular warfare both prior to and immediately after the events of 9/11.

¹⁰⁶ DOTMILPF.

Of course there are some, a very small minority of mainly special operations forces who operated in and understood the complexities of irregular environments during the late 80s and throughout the 1990s. But by and large, after Vietnam and prior to operations in OIF / OEF, our focus within the U.S. military was on improving our traditional military capability through technology. Improving conventional forces through transformation focused on technology to increase information awareness, mobility, and lethality.

ASSESSING RISK – CRITICAL FACTORS AND ACHIEVING BALANCE

*Implementing the National Defense Strategy and its objectives requires
balancing risks, and understanding the choices those risks imply*¹⁰⁷

Introduction

The concluding section of the 2010 QDR is titled “Chairman’s Assessment of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review.” In the Chairman’s comments, he highlights the QDR as focusing on his top priorities. The Chairman’s top priorities identified are, “improving stability and defending our vital interests in the Middle East and South Asia, remaining good stewards of the health of the force, and balancing risk.”¹⁰⁸ The Chairman discusses each priority and adds comment to what he observes as the critical and relevant points in addressing risk. The Chairman’s assessment of risk in the QDR is based on what he states as, “a realistic understanding of the security environment which remains complex, dynamic, and uncertain.”¹⁰⁹ Concluding his assessment, Admiral Mullen states, “Managing risk under the new QDR force planning construct requires further analysis....overall, the QDR provides an accurate depiction of our future national security requirements. Our challenge as a nation will be to properly resource these priorities.”¹¹⁰ To do this we must attempt to answer what the risks are to the current construct envisioned in the 2010 QDR. Are we making the “hard, strategy-informed

¹⁰⁷ Department of Defense, “*The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America.*” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2008), 20.

¹⁰⁸ Department of Defense, “*The Quadrennial Defense Review Report.*” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), 101.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 103.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 105.

choices” that enable us to create and maintain the right mix of forces and military capability to prevail in current conflicts and move towards the goal of achieving balance along the widest possible spectrum of conflict required to meet future challenges?

Challenges of Defining and Managing Risk

A specific definition of risk could not be found in Joint Publication 1.0, 2.0, or 3.0. Joint Publication 3.0 did contain a definition of risk management. JP 3.0 defined risk management as, “the process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risks arising from operational factors and making decisions that balance risk costs with mission benefits.”¹¹¹ In assessing risk, author and strategist Henry C. Bartlett states risk focuses on uncertainty and negative outcomes as a result of mismatches among key variables.¹¹² Further, in addressing the challenges of defining risk, Bartlett states that ultimately risk assessment is subjective because risk cannot always be precisely quantified. Quantification, the issue of uncertainty in the environment and the subjectivity of risk appear to be areas that DoD continues to struggle with. Dealing with the issue of risk is just plain hard and an endeavor that is difficult due to the size and complexity of activities within DoD. The Department of Defense recognizes that managing risk is at best an extremely difficult task. Assessing and managing risk is difficult for a number of reasons.

Risk management involves gaining consensus from and making decisions among the various stakeholders in the overall defense community. Stakeholders are the internal

¹¹¹ Joint Publication 3.0., “*Joint Operations*,” (September 17, 2006 with Change 1, February 13, 2008), GL-24.

¹¹² Bartlett, Holman, and Some, “*The Art of Strategy and Force Planning*”. *Strategy and Force Planning*. (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004), 5.

or external individuals or groups who have the potential to influence or affect an organization.¹¹³ Each will view risk differently in terms of their real or perceived costs and benefits. Senior defense professionals and executives, congressional members, defense contractors, individual Services, individual service members, the public, and allies are all examples of stakeholders who will determine and assess risk from their own unique perspective. Agreeing to risks and gaining buy-in on risk mitigation that satisfies each stakeholders concern is at best difficult. Stakeholders from various groups will often have competing objectives and priorities that may run parallel or counter to strategy objectives. Depending on decisions made and how those decisions affect the various stakeholders, acceptance or resistance to desired change is introduced. Proper recognition and management of this dynamic will be critical to making progress on defining and achieving future GPF capabilities along the widest possible spectrum of conflict.

Determining and managing risk is also difficult due to the dynamic security environment which requires DoD to be flexible and diminishes the value of formulaic risk assessments.¹¹⁴ Quantitative metrics and assessment are now in a supporting role and “informed judgment at all echelons of command” are identified as the backbone of assessing risk.¹¹⁵ This statement seems to reinforce our uneasiness with assessing risk. Even the Chairman in his comments on the QDR framework acknowledges that the force

¹¹³ R. E. Freeman, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Perspective*, (Pitman, Boston, 1984), 7.

¹¹⁴ Department of Defense, “*The Quadrennial Defense Review Report*.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), 89.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 89.

planning construct used requires further analysis.¹¹⁶ Despite the difficulties, constant analysis is required in continually assessing the environment. Change in the strategic environment can occur quickly and opportunities to assess possible changes and their impacts must not be missed. When new risks are identified, we must also possess the ability to react in order to mitigate. Caution should be taken though in not making major adjustments to strategy or conducting strategy redesign every time change is detected.¹¹⁷

As a framework to organize the risk assessment of the 2010 QDR, DoD used the risk categories of: operational risk, force management risk, institutional risk, and future challenge risk. This framework returns to the one originally designed and used in assessing risk in the 2001 QDR.¹¹⁸ The 2006 QDR makes mention of the 2001 risk framework and claims “the Department is now taking advantage of lessons learned from this initial implementation phase to refine and develop a more robust framework to enable decision-making.”¹¹⁹ Exactly what that framework is or how it informed the 2006 QDR is not stated and is unknown. A forth risk mentioned in the 2010 QDR is strategic, military and political risk.¹²⁰ Beyond acknowledging these categories of risk, the QDR speaks little of how these risks were assessed and mitigated.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 105.

¹¹⁷ Unless the risk is so detrimental, that radical change is required. This also implies that the constant development of programs and fads to address every change in the strategic environment is not true strategy and leads to confusion.

¹¹⁸ Department of Defense, “*The Quadrennial Defense Review Report*.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, September 30, 2001), 57.

¹¹⁹ Department of Defense, “*The Quadrennial Defense Review Report*.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, February, 6, 2006), 70.

¹²⁰ It is unclear in the 2010 QDR if Strategic, Military, and Political Risk were used as part of the QDR Risk Management Framework or if this risk category was added as a final thought.

In assessing risk associated with general purpose force capability and the challenge of achieving balance along the widest possible spectrum of conflict, the idea of strategic, military, and political risk will be expanded upon. The variables of defense strategy, the economy and defense spending, domestic considerations, military service cultures, Congress and the defense establishment, and the moral dilemma will be discussed as key factors that must be addressed in the risk equation. Though not specifically identified by name as part of the QDR framework for assessing risk, each of these variables are factors that impinge in some way on the overall ability of DoD to rebalance capabilities, reform institutions, and ensure success today while preparing for a wide range of contingencies in the future. Any one of these factors can present external and emerging issues that can undermine the ability of DoD to execute its current strategy along any of the four identified risk categories.

The success or failure of current strategy will someday be assessed in terms of how well future forces were prepared to meet threats to our national security. Strategy will be assessed by how successfully or unsuccessfully GPFs were prepared to influence, counter or defeat a threat in conjunction with other instruments of national power or with allies. How well GPFs are prepared or resourced to meet future threats or how versatile they prove to be when faced with complex environments in which they are forced to adapt, will be key indicators of how well risk was assessed and appropriate measures taken to mitigate those risks. In this traditional model of assessing risk, success of the current strategy is ultimately judged by the strategies failure, success, or flexibility in mitigating future risk.

Critical Factors – Additional Risks to Achieving Balance

Defense Strategy

*Strategists must avoid the pitfall of using uncertainty as a rationale to avoid major change.*¹²¹

In a prepared Joint Statement issued by Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen to the House Armed Services Committee on the 2010 QDR, Secretary Gates said, “real strategy requires making real choices.”¹²² The Joint Statement also claims “the need to promote and defend America’s interests in a complex world requires a defense strategy that conveys a clear sense of priority while being agile enough to evolve and adapt over time.”¹²³ Taking these two statements into consideration, how does the defense strategy as informed by the 2010 QDR clarify priorities and drive change that will provide for the maximum capability and versatility required in our GPFs across the widest possible spectrum of conflict?¹²⁴

The four defense strategy end states or objectives listed in the 2010 QDR are similar to the five objectives listed in the 2008 version of the National Defense Strategy. The four priority objectives among which resources and risk will be balanced are; prevailing in today’s wars, preventing and deterring conflict, preparing to defeat

¹²¹ Andrew F. Krepinevich, “*Strategy for the Long Haul: An Army at the Crossroad,*” (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2008), 4-5.

¹²² Office of the Secretary of Defense & Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Prepared Joint Statement to the House Armed Service Committee (HASC) on the 2010 QDR” (Washington, D.C.: February 1, 2010), 1.

¹²³ Ibid, 2.

¹²⁴ In the prepared statement provided to the HASC, the words “plausible spectrum” is used. In other statements and within the 2010 QDR Report the words “widest possible spectrum” is used. The former implies a manageable spectrum and the latter the wide, large, or full spectrum.

adversaries and succeeding in a wide range of contingencies, and preserving and enhancing the all-volunteer force.¹²⁵ The six key mission areas for enhancement in the 2010 QDR differ slightly from the six core mission areas (CMAs) used in the DoD roles and mission framework; the framework used to identify joint capability requirements and against which capabilities enhancements in the FY 11 budget and FYDP are targeted.¹²⁶ Figure 3 provides a simple matrix for comparison of objectives, priorities, and key mission areas as contained in key strategy documents.

2006 QDR Priority Areas	2008 NDS Key Objectives	2009 Roles and Missions-DoD Core Mission Areas	Updated National Security Strategy	2010 QDR Priority Objectives	2010 QDR Key Mission Areas for Enhancements
Defeating terrorists networks	Win the long war	Irregular warfare	?	Prevail in today's wars	Defend the U.S. and support civil authorities at home
Defending the homeland in depth	Defend the homeland	Homeland defense / civil support	?	Preserve and enhance the all-volunteer force	Succeed in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism
Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads	Promote security	Military contribution to cooperative security	?		Build the security capacity of partner states
Preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction (WMD)	Deter conflict	Deterrence	?	Prevent and deter conflict	Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments
	Win our nations wars	Major combat operations	?	Prepare to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies	Prevent proliferation and counter weapons of mass destruction
		Military support to security, stability, transition and reconstruction	?		Operate effectively in cyberspace

Figure 3. Key Guidance Documents and Frameworks containing Strategic Objectives, Priorities, and Mission Areas that informs Defense Strategy. Source: Author.

¹²⁵ Department of Defense, “The Quadrennial Defense Review Report.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, February, 2010), v-vii.

¹²⁶ Refer to Chapter 3, Figure 2. “Department of Defense Framework for the QRM, Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report,” (January 2009), 3.

The 2010 QDR key mission areas do signal where the priority within DoD will be placed. Unfortunately, capability enhancements as articulated in the recent QDR all point to short-term investments in capabilities that are in reality equipment and programs that equate to enablers required to prevail in the current fight. The enablers cited are those assets and capabilities most in demand during our recent experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq. Increasing ISR, rotary-wing lift, and linguist capability, converting a heavy brigade combat team to a Stryker configuration, and adding a fourth naval riverine squadron. All are cited as examples of increased capability enhancements being pursued to increase flexibility and agility of general purpose forces.¹²⁷

Lacking are major program adjustments to rebalance or align capabilities with other key mission areas required to meet future capabilities. The 2010 QDR sections on *Rebalancing the Force* and *Guiding the Evolution of Force* shows a near-term and supply-based focus on capabilities.¹²⁸ This is also manifest by the emphasis placed in the QDR on improving two areas. The current capability gaps to prevail in today's wars and focus on rebalancing resources towards personnel programs to preserve and enhance the all-volunteer force. For example, the main elements of U.S. force structure specified for the duration of the FY 11-15 FYDP, primarily address capabilities enhancements to prevail in the current fight. The strategy minimizes near-term risk but defers the long-term risk pending further assessment of future scenarios. As a result of this approach, lacking are any operational concepts explaining how the strategic objectives of preventing and deterring conflict and preparing to defeat adversaries and succeeding in a

¹²⁷ Department of Defense, "*The Quadrennial Defense Review Report*." (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), 24.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 17-41.

wide range of contingencies will be achieved. The allocation of resources and force structures adjustments do not constitute making real choices; they simply defer making hard choices.

The current defense strategy identifies in detail what needs to be done to improve GPF capability in the current fight and acknowledges that from analysis, emerged “the importance of ensuring that U.S. forces are flexible and adaptable so that they can confront the full range of challenges that could emerge from a complex and dynamic security environment.”¹²⁹ The current strategy focuses on immediate needs both in GPF enablers and the rebalancing of programs to sustain a strained force. As economic realities set in and deficits grow, we may find ourselves making due with the force we create by 2014.¹³⁰

The Economy and Defense Spending

In a recent New York Times article written by Jackie Calmes, Calmes argues that a fiscal day of reckoning is approaching faster than expected. The author makes the argument that this day of reckoning is brought on by the recent global recession costing trillions of dollars in lost tax revenues and deficit spending is accelerating the effects of decades of wasteful budgeting and escalating health care costs with an aging population.¹³¹ Despite the warning signs and signals, politicians refuse to make

¹²⁹ Ibid, 18.

¹³⁰ 2014 is the point at which the Congressional Budget Office predicts that interest debt will exceed the annual appropriations for domestic programs. “Party Gridlock Feeds New Fear of a Debt Crisis,” *New York Times*, (February 17, 2010), sec. A1, 1.

¹³¹ “Party Gridlock Feeds New Fear of a Debt Crisis,” *New York Times*, (February 17, 2010), sec. A1, 1.

concessions or implement required change that violates party lines. Alan K. Simpson, recently chosen by President Obama to head the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility, said in the article, “There is not a single sitting member of Congress – not one – that does not know exactly where we are headed...we are at a point right now where it does not matter whether you are a Democrat or a Republican if you have forgotten you are an American.”¹³² In the name of politics, strategic hard choices are not being made. Deferring these decisions puts DoD and in turn, our nation at risk as we continue to develop short sighted strategies that simply cannot be sustained over time.

Internal to DoD, improving GPF capability will encompass not only investment in key enablers to prevail and win our current wars, at some point hard decisions are going to have to be made to enable new GPF capability that achieves the versatility and balance to address threats across the widest possible spectrum of conflict.¹³³ Specific future capabilities and the means to enable yet to be identified joint capabilities, will require investment that differs significantly from simply rebalancing through cancellation of over budget legacy programs or hedging to minimize risk in the near term. The current strategy as manifests in the FY 11 budget and FYDP show a clear strategy-to-program mismatch according to an initial assessment conducted by Mark Gunzinger and Jim Thomas in their review of the 2010 QDR for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary

¹³² Ibid, A14.

¹³³ GPF capability enablers resourced in the FY 11 defense budget include increasing Special Operations Forces and support organizations, rotary-wing assets, expanding AC-130 capability, expanding unmanned intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance (ISR) systems and standing up light fixed wing aircraft squadrons to assist with partner training and IW.

Assessments.¹³⁴ This may imply that because our current strategy does not force hard choices, we simply default to executing programs as we have done in the past. In doing so, we keep stakeholders, who fail to see the risks, content.

Throughout this document, accurate strategic assessments, clear strategic guidance, clearly articulated risks imply that these fundamental tools combined with strong leadership would be all that is required to drive change. Unfortunately, history has proven this is not the case. One significant obstacle to change, to achieving increased GPF capability once requirements become clear and priorities are set, is the current acquisition process. Authors Jim Cooper and Russell Rumbaugh in a recent *Joint Forces Quarterly* article argue that because we do not buy jointly, Services dominate the acquisition process. Flaws in the strategic guidance process, Service bureaucracies – parochialism and adherence to their own organizational imperatives along with a 40-year history of maintaining consistent shares of defense budgets are dynamics that make the current acquisition process resistant to change.¹³⁵ The current issues with defense acquisition which result in budgets that display a strategy-to-program mismatch, coupled with the inability to make the hard strategic-driven choices and the almost inevitable fiscal pressures that will eventually limit or decrease future discretionary defense spending, create extreme risk in the ability of DoD to execute its current defense strategy.

¹³⁴ Mark Gunzinger and Jim Thomas, *"The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review: An Initial Assessment."* (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment: Washington D.C.), www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/B.20100201.The_2010_QDR_An_In/B.20100201.The_2010_QDR_An_In.pdf (accessed February 27, 2010). 11.

¹³⁵ Jim Cooper and Russell Rumbaugh. "Real Acquisition Reform." *Joint Forces Quarterly*. (4th Quarter, No. 55. 2009). 59-65.

The result will be an unavailability of future resources and the inability to spend money in order to rapidly close or mitigate GPF capability gaps in the future.

Domestic Threats and Pressure

Domestic pressure and political risk are closely related. Since 9/11 we tend to think in terms of threats as external to our borders and as being in the realm of DoD. Domestic discretionary spending on defense programs has grown from about 22 percent to more than 29 percent since 2001. During this same period, domestic discretionary programs shrank from 18.4 percent of the budget to 14.7 percent.¹³⁶ Surprisingly, this research also discovered that the growth in funding for defense is not directly related to past or on-going combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. On-going and routine funding not related to war has grown at an average annual rate of 4.8 percent per year since 2001, after adjusting for inflation.¹³⁷ As resources become scarce, this trend will not be sustainable. Internal domestic issues can pose just as significant a threat to our nation as external ones if they go ignored.

Current economic conditions, poverty, concerns over access and affordability of health care, education, the threats from drugs and gang-related violence, illegal immigration and trafficking, security concerns over border violence, and natural disasters or pandemics are all domestic issues that pose current and future threats to our nation. If these threats or their impacts are significant enough to move the population to action, political pressure will be exerted on elected officials and competition with defense for

¹³⁶ Richard Kogan, “Federal Spending, 2001-2008: *“Defense is a Rapidly Growing Share of the Budget, While Domestic Appropriations Have Shrunk.”* (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Revised March 6, 2008). <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=125> (accessed March 18, 2010).

¹³⁷ Ibid.

scarce resources will occur. Regardless of the possible threats, at some point the national debt will focus attention to domestic issues as the expense of defense. As a nation, we could be forced (constrained by resources, strategy, or both) to scale back our global focus and prioritize threats that exist from within the domestic agenda.

U.S. Military Service Cultures

The broadest possible spectrum of conflict will continue to be defined as further scenarios and analysis help to identify the capabilities required in future GPFs. Recent lessons learned tell us that as a result of globalization and technological change operating environments and adversaries become more complex. History and recent lesson also tell us that military forces employed into complex environments are often slow to adapt. U.S. general purpose forces possess the versatility to adapt but, adaptation is often driven by informed leadership, increased capability through critical enablers applied in new and innovative ways, and through other means. In achieving increased versatility and capability, is there risk in maintaining our Service specific cultures as the expense of moving towards a purely joint military service?

The 2010 QDR claims that “to institutionalize lessons learned over the past few years, DoD has made and will continue to make substantial changes to personnel management practice, professional military education and training programs, and career development pathways.”¹³⁸ We like to believe this is true, but until we move away from the industrial-based Cold War era management system for organization, education, career development and promotion, very little will change within the Services. Each Service

¹³⁸ Department of Defense, “*The Quadrennial Defense Review Report*.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), 21.

brings a unique culture, perspectives and capabilities to the joint fight. They also bring associated baggage and a resistance to change and innovation that could prove to be detrimental to achieving the full range of capabilities required to meet future challenges. In other words, maintaining the status quo has risk. Somehow, we must break the paradigm of status quo, anticipate and make required change before we are forced by circumstance or survival to think in new and innovative ways; to structure and employ for missions in dynamic and complex environments. In an ideal situation, we would bridge the gap between service-centric ways of doing business and capability to fully achieving the joint capabilities envisioned across the widest possible spectrum of conflict; doing this through a purely joint military force.

The U.S. Congress and Defense Contractors

As significant stakeholders in defense related issues, the U.S. Congress and defense contractors possess unique ability to exert influence and are affected by numerous factors and other stakeholders. Decisions, support, or resistance to change by these individuals or groups can have major impacts on outcomes. An age-old factor that plays on risk in relation to these groups is that, “all politics are local.” Within the legislative branch, a recent trend that invites increased risk is the failure to move beyond one’s own-self or party interest and put the interest of the nation and national security at the forefront. This political dynamic also applies to the thousands of defense contractors who place lucrative contracts and income above the true national security interests of the nation.

As those in charge of appropriations and the processes to acquire resources and capabilities, reform in both areas will be required as the lead time between identification of strategic threats and the need to field required capabilities will continue to narrow. This lead time will become smaller and smaller as globalization continues and more people and groups gain access to advanced technologies and destructive capabilities. Defense authorizations and appropriations, programs and processes will have to be strategy-focused on the right things be it force structure or enabling systems and capabilities.

The Moral Dilemma – The Urge to Make Things Right.

As the World's leading major super-power, should the U.S. assume the role of global leader? Will we as a nation possess the means to support this role if the U.S. commits to influence and possible intervention across the entire globe. As we have seen in the strategies adopted by both the Clinton and Bush administrations, strategies that attempt to do it all without prioritizing across issues or balancing resources-where everything is important, can quickly bring a country to the edge of strategic exhaustion.¹³⁹ Of course, the opposite strategy of retreat and isolation is not an option in today's globalized society. To mitigate the risk of aimlessly wandering the globe attempting to address every dilemma that runs counter to our American way of life, the U.S. must clearly articulate and remain focused on what it deems as vital national interests. Failure to do so will lead to the over-reach of U.S. resources.

¹³⁹ Shawn Brimley, Michele A. Flournoy, and Vikram J. Singh. *"Making America Grand Again: Toward a New Grand Strategy."* (Washington D.C.: Center for a New American Security, 2008), 9.

Adopting grand strategy that manages engagement and commitment of military force focused on our values and vital U.S. interests is one way to mitigate risk and focus GPF capabilities across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. This does not imply that as a strategy we only engage when perfect conditions exist, forces are available and ready, and everything is going our way. It does imply that we must understand the limits to our power, exercise patience, and that for the U.S. to be effective, must advance our fundamental national interests through cooperation.¹⁴⁰

Conclusion

This chapter defined risk and the various stakeholders who influence risk and risk mitigation. The challenges of defining and mitigating risk were also examined by discussing the shortfalls of the current defense strategy. As articulated, the current defense strategy addresses the requirement of current capabilities to prevail in today's fight but incurs significant risk in defining and achieving the capabilities required in the near to long-term. The lack of a clear national strategy that defines vital national interests and the complexity of predicting future environments are root causes of the difficulty in clearly defining future military capabilities. Strategic, military, and political, and economic factors will have an impact on our ability to execute and sustain our current defense strategy and may limit our ability to achieve GPF capability across the widest possible spectrum of conflict. Our ability and flexibility to close GPF capability gaps and enable GPFs to adapt when faced with complex problems that require change will be limited as resources dwindle.

¹⁴⁰ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*. 1 ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2003).

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Vita

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